

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 13, NO. 40

OCTOBER 25-31, 1989

\$1.25

WALL STREET

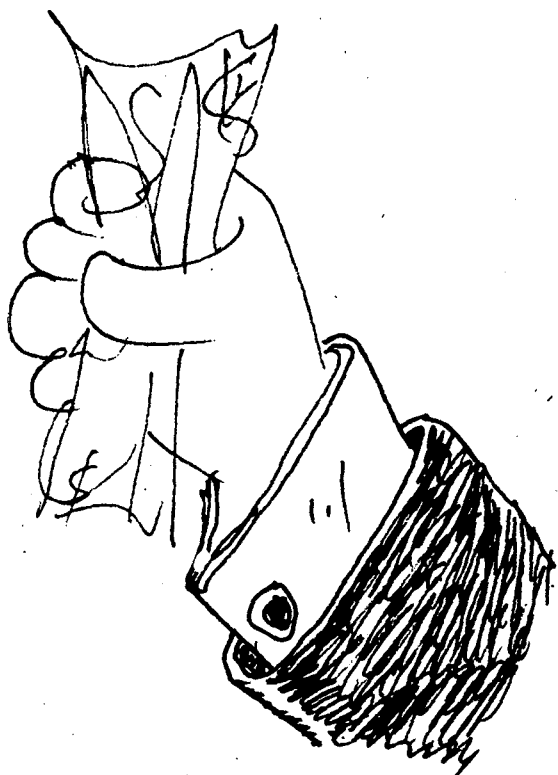
ON THE VERGE OF A

NERVOUS

BREAKDOWN

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page 3



Capital gains tax break: handout for the least deserving

By David Moberg

Senate Democratic leaders may have temporarily fended off the bloodsucking specter of a capital gains tax break, but they didn't manage to drive a stake through its heart. The fiend, who already has propagated other potential vampire attachments to the tax code, will return.

The near-victory of President Bush's special gift to the economic Count Draculas of the nation provokes two questions. How could such a dreadful idea come so far so fast? And if it is such a bad idea, what public policy should be pursued towards capital accumulations? That question takes on added urgency with the growing shakiness of financial markets, signaled in the recent scare of Friday the 13th (see story on page 3).

The political gate was opened by House Ways and Means Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, and conservative

Democrats—especially those from districts Bush won handily—rushed through it. In recent years the Democrats have become so addicted to handing out tax breaks that they find it hard to kick the habit. Democrats, especially incumbents, have also become far more beholden to corporate donors who adore tax breaks. The arguments against the capital gains cut are overwhelming, especially if the Democrats claim to represent the average working American. In general, proposed capital gains tax cuts would:

- Be unfair. Nearly two-thirds of the capital gains tax break approved by the House would go to less than 1 percent of the population, the richest Americans, earning \$200,000 a year or more. Even defenders, using misleading figures for income categories to create the illusion of more middle-class benefits, admit the benefits are skewed.

- Undermine the 1986 tax compromise. Treating capital gains as normal income was the major quid pro quo granted in exchange for drastically reducing the top tax rates. Giving a break to capital gains would make the rich double winners—lower income taxes, even lower capital gains taxes. Also, the move would open up the old, discredited game of competing tax breaks, nearly all of which primarily benefit the relatively wealthy. One popular Democratic rejoinder, for example, is a proposal to expand IRA tax breaks—giving something to the upper 11 percent instead of just the top 1 percent. But the vast majority of low- to moderate-income Americans would end up paying for either of the proposals and get nothing in return. The nation's growing inequality in both wealth and income would increase further.

- Decrease federal revenues, increase regressive taxes and sabotage needed programs. Despite a likely short-term gain as the rich cashed in some assets, the House-approved capital gains tax cut would soon drain more than \$5 billion a year from federal revenues, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. With continued budget pressures, that means less spending on the nation's deep needs and/or more taxes on workers, whose share of the nation's tax burden has been steadily rising in recent decades.

- Fail to generate significant economic growth. Even under the 1986 reform, capital gains rates are nearly as low or lower than they've been most of the past several decades. Despite grave warnings about undermining savings and investment, the 1986 bill had no such impact. And, conversely, the 1981 capital gains tax cuts didn't boost savings or investment.

Business as usual: American University economics professor Robert Blecker, now at the liberal Economic Policy Institute, says, "There's no evidence that lower capital gains taxes increase savings." But, Blecker adds, changes in the capital gains tax could affect the form savings takes, such as executives taking stock options rather than salary increases. And several analysts warn that cutting the rate may simply encourage more short-term investment or incentives to sell stocks to leveraged buyouts—two tendencies that hurt, not help, the economy.

Most investment comes from corporate depreciation and retained earnings. Most outside investment, even for the new high-tech ventures that Bush wants to encourage, comes from institutional funds or other sources uninfluenced by tax rates.

Instead of a straight capital gains tax cut, Congress may be tempted to index capital gains for inflation—with Rostenkowski and other Democrats leading the charge. Despite the logic of not taxing illusory gains, indexation would yield benefits that are almost as regressive and would cause far greater revenue losses than the proposed capital gains tax cut. Besides, why index only capital gains and not all forms of savings or income? In any case, capital gains already are sheltered: they are only taxed when realized, as when an asset is sold, so that wealth can accumulate year after year and even be passed on in an estate without the gain being taxed.

If a capital gains tax cut provides no clear public benefits and brings oodles of ill effects, what public policy is needed toward capital? The first logical step is to define the problem. It is not lack of capital. Blecker, like economists ranging from Keynesian Robert Eisner to supply-sider Paul Roberts, argues that even though personal savings may be down in the '80s, overall private savings

and investment—mainly corporate-retained earnings and capital-consumption allowances—are similar to levels of the previous two decades. The massive credit available to takeovers in recent years reinforces the impression that there is no shortage of cash for business.

So what is wrong? Starting at the top of the list, there is insufficient public or private investment for long-term productive enterprise, and not enough money in the hands of low- to moderate-income families here and abroad. And there is far too much speculative frenzy and hypermobility of capital. Governments have lost much of their limited ability to discipline and plan financial markets, which have become so self-cannibalizing that they threaten the foundations of the real economy.

A cry for help: This month's stock market plunge on Friday the 13th reflected a growing skittishness about the takeover-induced overinflation of many corporations' real value, as well as the vulnerability of companies carrying heavy debt loads. As in the big crash two years ago, fear that government regulation could put an end to the binge may have played a role. But rather than see such fear as a reason to steer clear of controls to avoid risking a stock market crash—as Democrats did in 1987—political leaders should respond as they would to an attempted suicide and see the stock jitters as a subconscious cry for help.

To stem the speculative frenzy, they should first impose a tax on all transactions in stocks and other financial instruments, as most other industrialized countries do. A modest half-percent tax could encourage a longer-term outlook, reduce speculative churning and bring in \$10 billion a year. More drastically and more effectively, Congress could impose a 100 percent tax on capital gains of all assets held less than one year, as proposed by Columbia University law professor and former businessman Louis Löwenstein in *What's Wrong With Wall Street?* The

INSIDE STORY

point is not confiscatory taxation but forcing the markets to do what they were intended to do, provide long-term capital to business.

To discourage the leveraged-buyout craze, which is now in large part subsidized by taxpayers, Congress should eliminate or limit deductibility of interest. If Congress chooses to treat dividends the same as interest and permit both to be deducted, the top income tax rates should be raised. It could also impose excise taxes on the huge merger-and-acquisition fees paid to lawyers and investment bankers. In general, government has to move back toward greater regulation of the banks and financial markets to steer institutions away from short-term speculation.

But the public must get its own investments in order. The country must invest much more heavily in public goods, including the physical infrastructure and the education and health of its citizens. As a percentage of gross national product, annual capital outlays for public works have declined by more than 50 percent since the mid-'60s. Chicago Federal Reserve Bank economist David Aschauer has shown that increased public investment now would probably bring greater financial return than comparable private investment. The biggest problem with the federal deficits of the '80s was not their size but that the money was squandered rather than spent on improving the nation's economic productivity and quality of life.

Finally, rather than give tax breaks to the rich, the government should act to reduce income inequality, ease Federal Reserve monetary policy, boost earnings of the poor, write off most Third World debts and spur Japan and Germany in particular to pursue more expansive domestic policies. When there is a market for products that permits companies to make profits, when public investment is aiding productivity growth and when speculative distractions are minimized, investors are more likely to put their money to work doing something socially useful.

CONTENTS

Inside Story: The problem with capital gains tax cuts	2
Wall Street does the jitterbug	3
In Short	4
Earth First! Decorum last	6
Chicago blacks forging new solidarity	8
The Virginia governor's race, in black and white	9
Argentine leader forgets the past	10
America's quiet invasion of the Andean region	11
From the trading floor to the drug war	12
Editorial	14
Letters/Sylvia	15
Viewpoint: Death penalty logic—kill the right people	16
Ashes & Diamonds by Alexander Cockburn	17
In Print: <i>In Search of Gay America</i>	18
<i>To Asmara, a novel from Eritrea</i>	19
<i>Two riffs on jazz great Mingus</i>	19
<i>Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics</i> ..	19
In the Arts: The Nica-folk fusion of Mancotal	20
<i>Friendly Dictators—trade 'em with your friends</i>	21
Classifieds/Life in Hell	23
What's up, docudrama?	24

(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©1989 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 13, No. 40) published Oct. 25, 1989, for newsstand sales Oct. 25-31, 1989.

By Kevin Kelly

Market plunge a blue-chip indicator of economy's debt-driven decline

ONE TRUTH EMERGED FROM THE OCTOBER 13 market crash, it was that Wall Street can still panic. The 190.58-point drop was the second worst ever in terms of magnitude, and the 12th steepest on a percentage basis. What worried investors and federal regulators most was the rocket-like speed of the collapse—despite so-called circuit breakers installed after the October 1987 market meltdown, the market dropped 154 points in only 65 minutes.

The stock stampede began with a news flash that at first glance seemed to have little to do with the market as a whole. When the UAL Corp. buyout group said it had failed to get bank financing for its \$6.8 billion deal to purchase United Airlines Inc., the announcement sent speculators in takeover stocks running to sell United, airline stocks and all other stocks connected with takeover rumors.

The Standard & Poor's 500-stock futures index took only 15 minutes after the UAL announcement to reach its first "circuit breaker"—pauses in trading intended to allow brokers and traders a chance to cool off. But when trading resumed at 3:30 p.m. the futures index fell 100 more points in only 15 minutes. "The [1987] market reforms seem pretty ineffective," one stockbroker said afterward.

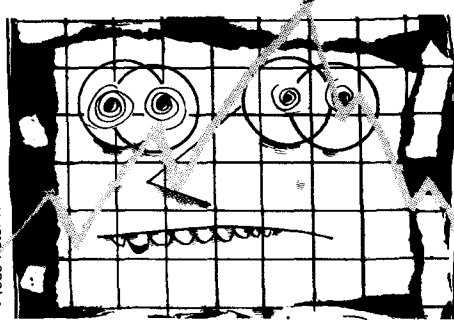
Heavy selling was aided by computers. Big investment funds use computer programs to trigger stock sales when the market falls to a certain level. On October 13, computers began dumping millions of shares as the market slid downward, invigorating an already aggressive sell-off. "This wouldn't have happened without computers," groused investor William Smith.

But blaming computers, the stalled UAL deal or ineffective market reforms misses the point. For once, the market did the right thing. It crashed so precipitously because investors—along with union leaders, federal officials and corporate chiefs—are finally becoming unnerved by Corporate America's love affair with debt.

A rash of failed and troubled highly leveraged buyouts has fueled apprehension about U.S. competitiveness. Campeau Corp., the Toronto-based retail company that owns Bloomingdales and Federated Stores, announced in September that it couldn't make interest payments on its \$10.5 billion debt. Merv Griffin's Resorts International Inc., saddled with \$915 million in debt, is threatened with bankruptcy. Dozens of other companies, including \$4.3 billion Southmark Corp. and \$8.5 billion Texas Air Corp., have signaled they need debt relief.

Hooked on junk: And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Corporate America has amassed \$1 trillion in debt over the last decade. More than \$200 billion of that corporate debt is "junk"—high-risk debt that pays hefty interest. An economic study of the junk market predicts that default rates will soar to 19 percent by 1993, up from 13 percent this year.

This debt load is forcing companies to focus time and talent on paying it back. Over the summer a spate of articles in major business publications began to question whether debt wasn't strangling the U.S. economy. In-



terest payments gobble up 30 percent of corporate cash flow, forcing cutbacks in wages, benefits, research and market analysis. Falling wages, several economists predict, could precipitate a demand crisis and a depression.

Moreover, corporate debt distress is spilling over into the nation's ever-ailing bank system. U.S. banks have bought more than \$50 billion in corporate debt over the last three years. As long as companies pay interest, banks make good money. But now,

The market crashed so steeply because investors are finally becoming unnerved with Corporate America's love affair with debt.

with some interest payments uncertain, banks face the possibility of losses as great as those incurred on Third World loans. Says economic analyst Marc Baldwin: "We could be talking major government bailout here."

The UAL deal seemed to spotlight all these concerns at once. At \$300-a-share, it would have been the most costly takeover in airline history. The buyout group, led by senior executives and United's pilots, predicted the \$7.2 billion needed to finance the deal would be paid back, but only if no recession occurred and revenues grew at a 10 percent annual pace for the next decade.

No rose-colored glasses: Rosy projections didn't sit well with bankers fretting about a recession. The International Association of Machinists analysis of the UAL deal showed a "mild recession" would result in United taking in \$3.5 billion less cash over the next few years than the buyout group forecasted. The implication was that United would default on its interest payments. "The economics of the deal made no sense," said investor Martin Bass.

Despite prodding by Citicorp and Chase Manhattan, nervous banks refused to finance the transaction. Japanese investors, spooked by the demise of Campeau, shied away. The Machinists union, incensed that its members would face pay cuts and job insecurity, urged banks to put their money into more productive activities.

Continued on page 17



THE BEST I CAN TELL YOU IS THE SITUATION IS VOLATILE...STAY CALM!

INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

Pick a map, any map

Something has been missing from the U.S. media coverage of the nationalist movements that are causing Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov so much trouble. The struggle for independence sweeping the Baltic States has provided fertile ground for a number of political nuts—a situation that was cultivated, in part, by the CIA. As Diana Johnstone puts it, "Since World War II, refugee organizations in the U.S. and the CIA have encouraged nationalist movements as a way of causing trouble for the Soviet Union." Take the following interview between West German Radio and a member of the League for the Liberation of Lithuania (LLL).

Radio announcer: "In the Middle Ages, Lithuanian kings reigned over a territory stretching to the Black Sea. The League for the Liberation of Lithuania wants to link up to that past ... to build a Lithuania that would once again be free, independent and big... Borders would thus be up for grabs. Not only the Lithuanians could raise border claims based on prewar times. Vilnius, which is today the capital of Lithuania, was once called Vilna. It belonged to Poland until 1939, when the Hitler-Stalin pact deeded it to Lithuania. For more than two months political life in Vilnius has crystalized around LLL members [who are on a hunger strike]. Their goal: cancellation of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Of course, under no circumstances do the hunger strikers want to give back Vilnius. However they are generous to their German comrades on the subject of former Prussian territories."

Hunger striker: "Poland must give back Pomerania and Silesia to Germany, without any doubt."

Announcer: "And what about the Poles who live there now; should they be driven out?"

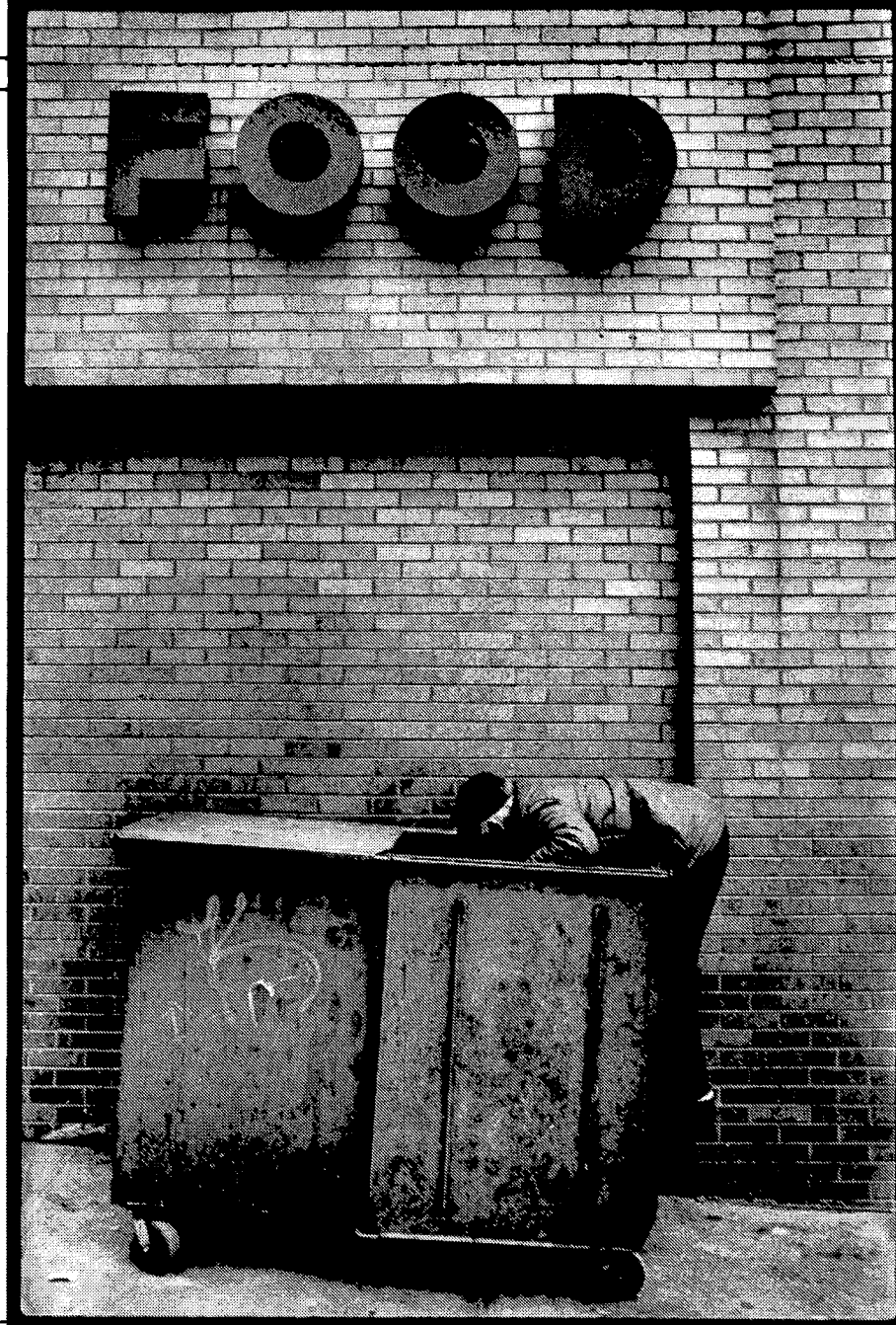
Hunger striker: "The 1949 Geneva Convention tells what to do with colonialists—they must be sent away, that's it. An old friendship binds us to the Germans from the time of the war. Many of your people sat in Stalin's concentration camps and know what a paradise that is. I only hope that the old soldiers of the Wehrmacht will tell young people and your government that Gorbachov can never be a good uncle.... There are no good and bad communists, just as there are no good and bad murderers. The German people have produced so many geniuses, for instance Franz Josef Strauss. Unfortunately only [British Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher the Iron Lady has recognized the situation. In the streets of Spain and Italy there are as many communists as dogs."

Riding the gravy train

George Bush has found a way to pay back the Republican Party animals who picked up his 1988 campaign tab. It is called the capital gains tax cut. As Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) told his colleagues in the House: "We've had eight years to learn a very important lesson. Tax breaks for the rich don't pay for themselves. Everyone in this chamber knows that cutting the capital gains tax is a money loser. Furthermore, we know that the reasons given to support this plan are specious, if not deceptive.... Behind all the rhetoric is a simple political motive. Candidate Bush knew that cutting the capital gains tax would be popular with big business and wealthy individuals. Trickle-down theory might be good politics for my Republican colleagues, but recent history has shown that it is also, without a doubt, disastrous economics." Most of the major dailies that criticized the tax cut did so on technical grounds. Few were as candid as the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, which put it this way: "Mr. Bush's priorities are now clear for all to see, and they are—quite simply—scandalous. Tax cuts for the rich while the homeless wander the streets, the elderly barely meet their medical bills and our schools crumble."

...into Hell's soup kitchen

It is a true story of the '80s—a tale of a homeless veteran who wandered the streets of Manhattan and the woman he killed. But none of the man's fellow New Yorkers in the television business are turning his life into a docudrama—disintegrating social fabric doesn't attract advertisers. The sad story is recounted by Max Cantor in the October 10 *Village Voice*. Daniel Rakowitz, psychotic and homeless, was a man a gentler, kinder nation would have institutionalized. He scrounged out a living on the streets of New York and eventually moved into an apartment with two of his friends. Rakowitz sold marijuana and collected donations of food from which he made soup to feed the homeless in Tompkins



Suppertime in Brooklyn Heights.

Union maids work Brazil's bordellos

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL—Amid general complaining about President Jose Sarney's corruption- and inflation-ridden government, one group has only praise for Brazil's four-year-old civilian administration. Brazil's prostitutes, who may number as many as 7.5 million in this nation of 144 million, say democracy has been good for them.

Gabriela Silva Leite, coordinator of the Brazilian Network of Prostitutes, the only such organization in Latin America, says, "The network could never have existed under military rule. Political organization was severely repressed, and sexual themes of all types were heavily censored."

Leite, a short, spunky 38-year-old, worked as a prostitute for 10 years in Brazil's three largest cities, São Paulo, Rio and Belo Horizonte. She said she learned the trade while studying sociology at the University of São Paulo in the mid-'70s. She stopped in 1986 to become a full-time organizer.

"It was the height of the sexual revolution," says Leite, recalling the '70s. "I was from a conservative lower-middle-class family and became completely lost." She says she wanted to "know another life" and intended to work as a prostitute just for a short period. "But I became very involved in the world of prosti-

tution," she said. "I worried about the women I worked with. We had no rights, and I wanted to do something about it."

Her dream of building a prostitutes' rights group began in 1978. Police officers in a notorious precinct in São Paulo were arresting and torturing prostitutes, two of whom, she said, died as a result of brutal treatment.

Leite helped organize a march of thousands of prostitutes and their supporters. As a result the police station was transferred out of the area.

"I began speaking in public and gained a lot of confidence while organizing the march," Leite says. "But it was only after the dictatorship ended [in 1985] that I thought a support group could really be established."

In 1987 Leite called the first nationwide meeting of prostitutes in Rio. Forty women attended. Since then the network has organized offices in all but three of Brazil's 26 state capitals and counts some 4,000 members. Leite is based in Rio, and that city's chapter, with more than 800 members, is the strongest in the country.

Leite, who says Brazil needs a sexual revolution, not a cultural one, thinks neither liberals nor conservatives understand prostitution. "The right wing believes prostitution is a necessary evil to protect the virginity of 'good girls,' because men need sex and women don't," she says. "The left says it results from capital-

ism and will disappear with the socialist revolution, but prostitution existed long before capitalism."

Leite says prostitution, though partly stemming from poverty, is deeply rooted in Brazilian concepts of sexuality. "Prostitution is one of the principal legs of support of the Brazilian family. Most men have a 'saint' at home for procreation and a 'sinner'—a prostitute or lover—to satisfy their sexual fantasies. Until this division, which many women accept, is ended, prostitution will never be understood."

The network is working actively to get laws rewritten to prostitutes' benefit. The Brazilian penal code, to be modified this year, does not make prostitution a crime, but owners of clubs and hotels where prostitutes work can be charged with misdemeanors.

"Yet the police never bother the owners because the owners pay them off," says Leite. "And prostitutes are forced to work under horrible conditions. The hotels are filthy and unsafe."

A second project is a health campaign designed to slow the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Brazil, after the U.S. and France, has the highest number of registered AIDS cases in the world.

"It's a real problem because men don't like to use condoms, and prostitutes are afraid that if they make them, they'll go to another woman," says Leite. "It's bad enough in the big cities in the south [Brazil's most

©George Cohen, Impact Visuals

developed region]. Imagine the problem with the ignorance and machismo of the north and northeast."

The network runs educational campaigns on AIDS, distributes condoms—known in Brazil as "little shirts of Venus"—and has a hotline for those with questions.

Leite is particularly proud of another of the network's projects, a new monthly 12-page newspaper called

Beijo da Rua, or "Kiss of the Street," that sells for 25 cents, "designed to show prostitutes they are human beings with rights and to help society at large start addressing the questions of prostitution and sexuality."

One feature of *Beijo da Rua* is the centerfold—a photo of a fully clothed prostitute accompanied by a text in which she responds to questions about political beliefs, intellectual

concepts and personal background.

Leite, who represented the network at the International Commission for Prostitutes' Rights in New York in June, says there is still much work to be done. "This vision of the prostitute as being outside the law, an outcast, has got to end," she says. "The network is the first step in our exit from the ghetto."

—Ken Silverstein

Between a rock and India—the Nepalese squeeze

KATMANDU, NEPAL—To visitors arriving in this city there are few signs of the 7-month-old Indian blockade of Nepal. Western tourists continue to flock to the capital for trekking vacations. Basic amenities can still be bought in the city's shops. Only the lack of motor traffic and certain hotel restrictions on hot water give a hint that something is amiss. On the outskirts of Katmandu, the signs are more visible. Crowds wait in long lines for cooking fuel. Gas stations close as their supplies run out. Outside the city and out of sight from the tourists, factories have either shut down or are running at a fraction of their capacity. Shortages of petroleum, salt and sugar are widespread.

Nineteen of Nepal's 21 transit points with India are closed by order of the Indian government because of their failure to renegotiate a transit agreement that expired in March. The blockade effectively cuts off most of Nepal's economic links with the outside world. Consequently, unemployment has skyrocketed.

Relations between India and Nepal deteriorated to such a point that the Indian government halted medical shipments for three weeks, prompting poverty-stricken but sympathetic Bangladesh to fly in emergency supplies.

Officially the dispute revolves

around Nepal's desire to negotiate a separate trade and transit agreement with India, but it is generally agreed that the real dispute concerns India's security interests and standing as the subcontinent's military giant. India has been pressuring Nepal to sign a security agreement along with the new transit treaty. New Delhi is upset about a 1988 Nepalese arms purchase from India's regional rival, China. It particularly irked the Indian government that the main items purchased were anti-aircraft weapons. The purchase came shortly after Nepal complained to New Delhi about unauthorized Indian air force flights over Nepalese territory. With Nepal refusing to negotiate a defense agreement and New Delhi unwilling to move until security is discussed, it is likely the impasse will continue for months.

"India has always tried to manipulate the politics of Nepal," says Ganesh Raj Sharma, a lawyer long active in Nepalese politics. Sharma says India also used the closure of transit points in 1960, 1971 and 1978 to pressure Nepal into adopting the Indian line. He also points to the Indian army's involvement in the Maldives and Sri Lanka, as well as continuing tensions on the country's borders with China and Pakistan, as evidence that India has expansionist aims.

Sharma and others say they fear Nepal could meet the same fate as its small Himalayan neighbors and become either dependent on India for its defenses, like Bhutan, or—in

the worst scenario—incorporated into India, as was the tiny state of Sikkim in 1975.

Others, however, see India as a less-menacing neighbor and place the blame on Nepal's ruling government. Banned Nepali Congress Party Secretary G.P. Koirala, who served seven years in prison for his political activities, says the dispute "could have easily been avoided" had Nepal, "knowing it would cause major problems in the future," not provoked India by purchasing weapons from China.

Koirala says Nepal's "unprecedented economic crisis" is a result of its political system, an absolute monarchy that has turned a personal feud between Nepalese King Birendra and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi into an international dispute affecting the welfare of Nepal's 17 million people.

Most Nepalese agree that the problem will not be resolved until after the Indian general elections in December. With Indian troops stuck in the quagmire of Sri Lanka's civil war and opposition parties capitalizing on corruption charges against Gandhi, standing tough on the transit dispute is one campaign issue Gandhi has found popular with Indian voters.

Meanwhile, to meet the demand for fuel, Nepal's forests are being cut down at an alarming rate, further decimating an environment that has already suffered at least 25 percent deforestation.

—Dan Pruzin

Blacks, animals and homosexuals discussed at Orange County conference

Under the leadership of Rev. Lou Sheldon, the Traditional Values Coalition (TVC) has launched an assault on the rights of California's lesbians and gays. The Orange County-based group's most recent attack took the form of a two-day conference at an Anaheim hotel on "Homosexuality and Public Policy Implications."

In addition to presenting "accurate facts" on homosexuality and providing workshops on "reparative therapy," the TVC conference featured an address by the head of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, William Allen. The title of his talk was "Blacks, Animals, Homosexuals: What Is a Minority?" Allen has since resigned.

Correspondents from the gay press were officially barred from the

conference. Nonetheless, in the remarks to the press after his speech, Allen applauded TVC organizers for their intellectual openness. When advised by a reporter that there were no gays or lesbians among the speakers or panelists, he said, "I don't think you have to introduce individuals in order to accomplish the purpose [of openness]."

In September a battle between the TVC and Orange County's gay community over the county's first gay-pride celebration came to a head. Having been unable to pressure the Santa Ana City Council to revoke the festival's city park permit, TVC leader Sheldon and several hundred followers descended on the fair site carrying signs condemning homosexuality and chanting, "Repent."

"We're here," Sheldon told reporters, "because we don't want the homosexual agenda and their recruitment efforts to become the consensus in Orange County." He also announced his intent to launch a recall drive against six city council

members who refused to block the festival.

The TVC is busy on several other fronts. The group has been working to overturn an Irvine, Calif., ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Up north, the TVC is involved in an effort to recall a Fremont, Calif., school board member who revealed that he is gay. Across the bay, the TVC is backing an effort to overturn San Francisco's Domestic Partnership Ordinance, which provides gays and lesbians in relationships with benefits such as hospital visitation rights.

Allied with the TVC in its fight against the "militant homosexual agenda" is Orange County Republican Congressman William Dannemeyer. According to Dannemeyer, that agenda includes "the right to become teachers and openly espouse their homosexual lifestyle," and eliminating the age of consent so "adults would be able to have sexual contacts with a child of any age."

—Timothy Stirton

Square. He had a long string of pets—dogs, cats and roosters—but they kept disappearing. In August his friends moved out and left the unemployed Rakowitz to find a responsible person to take over the lease. Enter Swiss dancer Monika Beerle, who apparently played with Rakowitz's affections to get the apartment's lease. Soon after she moved in, she told him to move out. So Rakowitz strangled her, cut her up and—it is rumored—made her into a soup that he fed the homeless.



Pot shot

Late this summer Mark Creamer, a 42-year-old sculptor from Lawrence, Kan., thought someone had to take a stand against the anti-drug hysteria and decided it might as well be him. He told *In These Times* the following tale where Midwestern civility meets the war on drugs:

"I was being torn up inside by how this war on drugs was seemingly coming off. So I made the decision that if President Bush didn't legalize marijuana in his drug speech, I was going to smoke pot until I was arrested. I alerted the local news media, but only the University of Kansas paper and a local cable station showed up at my press conference on the steps of the county courthouse in Lawrence. I spoke to the reporters, and then I smoked a marijuana cigarette. I tried to flag down a police car, but it didn't stop. I called 911 and reported that a man was blatantly smoking marijuana on the courthouse steps. A couple of patrol cars drove by. I waved and whistled, but they wouldn't stop. So finally I decided the only way I was going to get a cop to arrest me was to go down to the police station. I went into the police station and up to the window. I lit up another marijuana cigarette and blew the smoke through the talk hole in the glass.

I asked the female officer at the window: 'Is marijuana illegal?' She said: 'Yes it is.'

I said: 'Well, I'm smoking marijuana.'

She said: 'Well, wouldn't you like to do that somewhere else?'

I said: 'No.'

She said: 'Are you trying to get in trouble?'

I said: 'I don't think I am doing anything wrong, and it is not something I haven't done many times before.'

She said: 'So have a lot of other people.'

I said: 'Yes, I know.'

She said: 'Well, if you are trying to get in trouble we can certainly accommodate you.'

I said: 'Well, I'm standing here smoking marijuana, and I think you should do something.'

She said: 'Okay.'

"About two minutes later she and two other officers came and arrested me. They patted me down and did paperwork. Some were nice, some were not. I think some smoke dope, and some don't. The next day I had a bond hearing. Because of a previous arrest for possession of marijuana in 1972 they charged me with a class E felony. Bond was set at \$5,000. I was released on my own recognizance. I wasn't going to go anywhere; I'm a father of six."

Ecoguerrillas hurl monkeywrench into deforesters' clear-cut plans

By Don Lipmanson

NAVARRO, CA

A LONGSIDE A NARROW STRETCH OF CALIFORNIA Highway 128, a man wraps a heavy rope around a giant redwood tree and clamps both ends to his thick, leather climbing belt. By the light of the full moon he checks his equipment, digs his spikes into the thick bark, pulls tight on the rope ends and begins snaking his way up the tree. Across the road, another climber rappels to the ground after wrapping ropes and pulleys around the tree. A four-person crew carefully hoists a 3-by-6-foot plywood platform, a human tree-sitter and gear to heights normally reserved for birds and squirrels.

By dawn two large banners proclaiming "Stop Redwood Slaughter" and "Clearcutting is Eco-terrorism. Earth First!" are stretched between the platforms 50 feet above the roadway. Loggers driving by on their way to work see the banners of Earth First!, the radical and controversial environmental group, but see no activity in the trees or on the ground.

When the whine of loggers' chainsaws and the crash of falling trees reach their ears, the Earth First! (EF) demonstrators emerge from hiding in the brush to interrupt the steady flow of logging trucks that haul redwood and Douglas fir from the coastal forests to the Louisiana-Pacific (LP) lumber mill 35 miles inland. Several demonstrators push abandoned logs across the timber company access road to form barricades. A few miles down the highway, another EF contingent swings shut a heavy steel gate and padlocks the barrier as a lumber truck approaches. The load lurches dangerously and grinds to a halt as the driver slams on his air brakes. The trucker angrily leaps from his cab but stops when confronted by more than a dozen EF demonstrators.

Eventually an LP crew arrives with an acetylene torch to cut the lock and free the load. A Mendocino County sheriff's deputy grabs and arrests one man who steps back in front of the truck. Demonstrators contrast this swift police action with the deputies' failure the day before to break up an angry confrontation between gun-toting logging contractors and unarmed EF demonstrators. In that incident, a 50-year-old protester suffered a broken nose when an irate logger allegedly punched her in the face.

Sitting for attention: Similar tree-sits were held this summer in five other Western states, as well as in Massachusetts. EF called the protests to draw attention to the destruction of the nation's forests, to make the connection between deforestation and global warming, and to denounce the corporate profiteering and individual consumerism behind the whole process.

The ability to stage a week of national protest propelled EF into the limelight of the environmental struggle. While media coverage of the protests was expected, the respect grudgingly accorded them by the networks and mainstream newsmagazines took the group—more accustomed to hostility than



Earth First! unfurled this banner at a California tree-sit.

favorable reviews—by surprise.

Part of EF's notoriety stems from its early identification with two radical books, *The Monkeywrench Gang* and *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*. *The Monkeywrench Gang*, written by Edward Abbey in 1975, is a fictionalized account of environmental guerrillas wreaking havoc on bulldozers and bridges throughout the Southwest. The book laid the groundwork for EF's first organizers, who began holding annual wilderness gatherings in 1980. The yearly "Round River Rendezvous" attracted hundreds of participants who launched the militant EF movement.

From its first run the group's newsletter, *Earth First! Journal*, printed a regular feature detailing methods for sabotaging the spread of "civilization" at the expense of the natural world. EF became associated with tree-spiking and nocturnal attacks that damaged heavy roadbuilding or logging equipment. The movement's ad hoc tactics and tips on how to avoid getting caught were compiled in *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, which has sold nearly 20,000 copies since it first appeared in 1985. *Ecodefense* established EF's image as the uncompromising radical arm of the environmental movement. It also put EF at odds with the timber industry, the U.S. Forest Service and moderate environmentalists.

From guerrillas to people: In its early days, EF "depended on very small and dedicated bands who acted as examples, got arrested and drew stiff sentences," says Mendocino County organizer Judi Bari. "That turned out to be a blind alley."

Mike Roselle, part of the original guerrilla band, agrees. "In the last two years there's been a tremendous increase in public awareness that we're on the threshold of calamities

like global warming and nuclear meltdowns," he says. "Now we must organize people, not guerrillas, to deal with the problems."

Although EF organizers recognize the need for structure to channel grass-roots energies, a hatred for hierarchy and a fear of infiltration makes "no central organization" a fundamental EF rule. At present, EF operates as a loose-knit movement whose supporters, Roselle estimates, number in the thousands. Autonomous EF groups define their focus and tactics independently, while volunteer organizers like Bari circulate among the groups to promote communication and coordinate actions.

Daryl Cherney, a West Coast EF organizer, says he sees two main factions within EF's decentralized structure. One is an old guard that "wants to save wilderness but basically



Timber workers open a logging road gate locked by EF.

is loyal to the system," he says, and the other is an influx of recent recruits who are convinced that only a radical overhaul of society can avert ecological disaster.

Bari promotes the more militant view. "We need a society whose goal is a stable state with nature, instead of a society based on the exploitation of nature for human benefit," she says. "Life on the planet can't be saved by an industrial economy that needs to extract profit from the Earth and from workers alike. Earth First! has to face up to the revolutionary nature of its demands."

Logging to infinity: Among EF's foremost objectives are saving the remaining ancient forests and slowing the breakneck pace of logging in traditional woodlands, Bari says. EF works to protect the few remaining virgin

ENVIRONMENT

forests in the Pacific Northwest, as well as forests that are only beginning to recover from previous cuts.

The group's goals starkly contrast with the goals of profiteers in the logging industry. Harry Merlo, president of Louisiana-Pacific, defined his vision of forest management in a recent interview with the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*. "We log to infinity because we need everything that's out there," he said. "It's ours, it's out there, and we need it all. Now."

To combat what they view as corporate arrogance and greed encouraged by government bureaucracy, EF promotes provocative, confrontational tactics. The group uses blockades and lawsuits to obstruct logging plans along the Pacific coast and in Texas. Anonymous monkeywrenching is increasingly evident in the most heated conflicts. Recent Mendocino County sheriff's reports claim nearly weekly incidents of sabotage to bulldozers and other logging equipment where LP is active. Large spikes have been pounded into trees, usually followed by phone calls alerting the media. The publicity is intended to warn woodworkers that they risk accidents if a particular timber operation goes ahead as scheduled.

LP Public Affairs Manager Shepard Tucker accuses EF of "hurting working people and small family loggers, which doesn't accomplish much except to get people ticked off. Messing with property and the right to work is terrorism."

But Walter Smith, an independent logging contractor from a second-generation logging family, disagrees. "EF is on the right track, because a forest should be allowed to grow and reproduce at its own rate," he says. Smith, who serves on the Mendocino County logging advisory committee, says people must learn to expect less wood and fiber from forests, and timber corporations must accept "a big decline in raw materials, profits and executive incomes."

Despite management's hostility, EF organizers claim clandestine support among rank-and-file mill workers and Forest Service field employees. Stopping by a summer tree-sit, a California park ranger and her supervisor privately expressed dismay over corporate logging practices and praised EF's persistence in bringing public attention to the abuses.

Politicians' reactions to EF run a similar gamut. California state legislator Dan Hauser, a Democrat who represents the North Coast district where many EF battles are waged



Earth First! support crew prepares prior to member Greg King's 150-foot ascent to protest the timber industry's destruction of old-growth redwoods.

and who also receives sizable timber-industry campaign contributions, has a low opinion of the movement. When EF staged a tree-sit in his front yard, Hauser told the press, "If you let me know what they support, I'll oppose that." Other state representatives have introduced anti-spiking and anti-trespass bills to dissuade EF actions.

Environmental gadfly: But here and there, especially at the local level, politicians offer encouraging words. Mendocino County Supervisor Liz Henry voices sympathy for the EF philosophy. She says it "plays a gadfly role, which I welcome. I don't support property damage or spiking, but I do support EF when it nips at society's heels and keeps it going in the right direction."

Having seen the movement in action, both in the forests and in the supervisor's chamber, Henry says she believes EF is gaining political clout. "By dedicating such a large chunk of their lives to righting the delicate balance with nature, instead of just sending a check to a good cause, EF prods us politicians and sometimes gets action."

Environmentalists, too, display mixed feelings about EF. Save-the-Redwoods League Director John Dewitt, whose conservation organization purchases redwood groves from private owners like LP, would not com-

ment on EF other than to say he is "strongly opposed to tree-spiking or any other ecotactics which hurt anyone."

The Sierra Club—whose frequent willingness to reach a compromise with industry makes it a periodic target of EF ire—views the movement as a mixed blessing. Gail Lucas, chair of the Sierra Club Forest Practice Task Force, acknowledges that "Earth First!'s ability to bring big issues into the living rooms of America is commendable and necessary." But she condemns monkey-wrenching for "endangering the life and limb of timber workers."

The debate over the ethics of tree-spiking reached a peak in May 1987, when an industrial bandsaw blade shattered and ripped through the faceguard of mill worker George Alexander at an LP sawmill in Cloverdale, Calif. Alexander suffered a mangled jaw and severe facial injuries and lost a dozen teeth in the accident. The police report said the sawblade shattered when it struck an 11-inch nail, but Alexander told the press the saw was defective and was scheduled to be replaced the day after the accident. LP offered a large reward for apprehension of the spiker and accused EF of "supporting terrorism by supporting tree-spiking."

Commenting on the controversy, EF's

Roselle notes that spiking is an old practice, first outlawed by the California legislature in 1875. He says EF neither condones nor condemns it, but he admits to having spiked trees in southern Oregon during the Bald Mountain Road campaign, which he claims helped bring national attention to the battle over forests. Roselle says spiking is "a last-resort tactic, and not a violent act if done in such a way that a spike isn't encountered

One environmentalist praises "Earth First!'s ability to bring issues into the living rooms of America," but condemns some of its practices for "endangering the life and limb of timber workers."

accidentally. Spiking reduces profits by slowing down the [logging and milling] operation."

Nothing sacred: EF supports numerous environmental causes besides forest and wil-

derness preservation. EF has worked with local citizens to keep oil drilling rigs out of Gros Ventre Wilderness in northwestern Wyoming. In California, it worked against offshore oil development and the slaughter of dolphins by tuna boats up and down the coast. To support a boycott of Burger King for its part in the destruction of tropical rain forests, EF staged street demonstrations where costumed cows and hamburgers devoured struggling trees. To flaunt their disgust with consumerism, which they blame in large part for the present ecological crisis, EF demonstrators staged a "No Shopping As Usual Puke-In" at a mall in Bellingham, Wash., where protesters vomited on the floor.

With its goal of changing the world and its tactics that offend decorum and sometimes defy the law, it is hardly surprising that EF generates a mountain of controversy. But David Brower, who founded both Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute, says EF is just doing what needs to be done. "EF is giving CPR to an environmental movement that needs it, whose mission is to save the Earth, not its budget or its process," he says.

Don Lipmanson is a freelance writer based in Navarro, Calif.



Attorney Lewis Myers (center) and black leaders Margaret Burroughs and Lu Palmer protest a racial incident in a white Chicago neighborhood.

Bridgeport march: The charge that incidents of police brutality have increased since Daley's election is another issue that Palmer and other black activists consider tailor-made as a tool to organize political opposition to Daley. One particular incident that took place in Daley's Bridgeport neighborhood—in which two black teens allegedly were picked up and slapped around by white cops before being deposited into the hands of white toughs to be beaten—is especially damning (see *In These Times*, October 4).

In fact, black community leaders have scheduled a march through the predominantly white neighborhood to focus attention on the racially exclusive attitudes that they charge characterize the Bridgeport community. "We are attempting to mobilize our community for something much broader than just electoral politics," noted Lewis Myers Jr., a popular local attorney and the prime mover of the march through Bridgeport.

"It's our intention just to demonstrate to all that we have a right to walk wherever we want to in this city," he said. Myers insisted that political considerations were way down on his list of concerns. "All of us saw what happened to this community when electoral politics became our abiding concern; we went way off on a tangent over who was going to be mayor, and the African-American community split like it had never been split before. And there are still a lot of raw feelings out here about that split."

Myers said he will now attempt to organize the community around grass-roots issues. "Electoral politics is simply a means to an end; our social movement has to go on regardless of who the mayor is."

New York model: The attempt to mobilize the community by stressing consensus grievances is a tactic successfully used by black activists in New York City. Ironically, the New York organizers adopted the tactic in an attempt to jump-start a political movement inspired by the successful 1983 campaign of Harold Washington. Myers may be less concerned with the electoral ramifications of his organizing efforts than is Palmer, but there's little doubt that he too is out to oust Daley.

At a recent "Let's Get It Together" rally of the city's leading black activists, there was a clear call for renewed efforts to recapture City Hall. Most participants were careful, however, to refrain from naming potential candidates for fear of rekindling the bitter feuds that crippled the '89 campaign. Still, names were mentioned: Illinois Appellate Court Justice R. Eugene Pincham and attorney Thomas Todd were the two most prominently mentioned choices of the group.

Both men are powerful orators with controversial histories and confrontational styles. And both appeal strongly to the black nationalist elements who hold such sway over the city's black activist community. But there are many black Chicagoans who eschew the rhetoric and confrontational politics of the nationalists. One of the major elements of Harold Washington's political genius was his ability to synthesize the varied views of his constituents into a mix that all found pleasing. And, as the city is discovering, that type of genius is quite rare.

"Right now, we're concerned with bringing the community back together," Myers said. "We're trying to facilitate a healing process. And considering the powerful divisions that are still plaguing us, that alone will be a monumental task." □

Racist rebound in Daley's Chicago spurs blacks to heal political split

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

TWO YEARS AFTER THE SUDDEN DEATH OF Mayor Harold Washington plunged the black community here into a descending political spiral, the descent continues. The city that once provided a national model of multiracial coalition politics and reform-oriented government is reverting to a business-as-usual government of racial exclusion.

The April 1989 election of Richard M. Daley was accomplished with very little support from the African-American electorate. But despite its overwhelming rejection of Daley, the city's black leadership failed to agree on a candidate who could unify their community's varied segments, and those political divisions persist. Lacking a standard-bearer with enough appeal to bridge the rifts that emerged in the wake of Washington's death, Chicago's black political movement is becoming increasingly irrelevant to the city's governance. The Daley administration has taken quick advantage of this weakness and effected startling changes in the racial composition of city government.

The scope of those changes was recently publicized in a report by the Pulitzer-Lerner newspaper chain that documented a decrease by 27 percent in the number of blacks in policy-making positions while whites in such positions increased by 38 percent. Only six months into his term, the Daley team has substantially altered the racial parity painstakingly achieved by the Washington administration. These widespread personnel changes lend credence to black leaders' charge that Daley's election was an attempt to restore white hegemony in a city that is predominantly non-white.

Sensing vulnerability: But instead of despairing, the city's African-American leadership is virtually ecstatic about news of the Daley administration's apparent racial alignment. "For the first time since he [Daley] was elected, I am beginning to get the feeling that this man is vulnerable," said Lu Palmer, a community organizer and pivotal figure in Chicago's black political movement. Palmer struggled vainly to unite the black electorate

RACE RELATIONS

behind a single candidate in both the primary and general elections of 1989.

"Now this may come as a surprise to some, but because I was so devastated when Daley defeated Acting Mayor Gene Sawyer and then Alderman Tim Evans, I simply resigned myself to having Boss Daley II for the rest of this century," Palmer said. "But now I am taking an entirely different look at the mayoral race in 1991."

One reason for Palmer's new enthusiasm is the flurry of negative publicity Chicago is receiving on the race-relations front. First there was the criticism of Rev. Herbert Martin, who, upon his resignation as executive director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, questioned Daley's commitment to racial harmony. The mayor is ignoring a "racial time bomb," Martin charged. Daley and a chorus of adoring media pundits denounced Martin as a political agitator.

Next came a study by the Chicago Community Trust Human Relations Task Force that essentially endorsed Martin's view. The study found that the entire city suffers from racist practices that are "not only morally indefensible but economically and socially

destructive." The report thoroughly condemned the kind of racial isolation that is enshrined in Chicago tradition. More importantly, it stressed the need for city leaders to acknowledge racism; just as an alcoholic "must first admit his alcoholism to overcome it," so Chicagoans must first admit their own racism. "The difference is that alcoholism cannot be cured, while racism can and indeed must be," the report added.

Since the Chicago Community Trust is a widely respected group and since Daley himself joined in urging the study, the task force's conclusions couldn't be dismissed simply as a political attack. Daley even appointed Clarence Wood, one of the co-authors of the report, to Martin's old job as executive director of the Commission on Human Relations. Yet black leaders criticized Daley's response, which they said was too timid, and are closely monitoring the progress of the commission under this new leadership.

Instead of despairing, Chicago's African-American leadership is attempting to use its grievances to organize political opposition to the mayor, whose election was aided by black political rifts that emerged after Harold Washington's death.

By John B. Judis

ARLINGTON, VA

THIS NOVEMBER, VIRGINIA LT. GOV. DOUGLAS Wilder could become the first black governor in the U.S. since Reconstruction. His election could also signal a very significant defeat nationally for Republican conservatism.

Wilder now leads former state Attorney General Marshall Coleman in the opinion polls. Like New Jersey Democratic gubernatorial candidate Rep. Jim Florio, Wilder has been helped by the growing backlash against the Supreme Court's July 3 abortion decision, *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services*. Polls at the beginning of the summer showed Coleman running about 5 to 10 percent ahead of Wilder, but the most current polls, taken after Wilder's lambasting of Coleman for his anti-abortion stand, show the lieutenant governor narrowly ahead. According to a September 22 *Washington Post* poll, Wilder leads Coleman among the two-thirds of voters who think abortion is an "important" issue and holds a 48 to 39 percent lead among female voters.

But the abortion issue has only reinforced a trend that has been developing in Virginia politics since 1981, when Chuck Robb won the governorship. In 1980, Republicans held nine of the state's 10 House seats, two out of the three top state offices, including the governorship, and one of two Senate seats—the other belonging to pro-Reagan independent Harry Byrd. But as Wilder and Coleman face off, five of 10 House members, all the top state officials and both senators are now Democrats.

Republicans turn right: The Democrats' success in Virginia during the last decade is partly a result of a changing population. Formerly a state of tobacco farmers, the state is becoming the vanguard of white-collar suburbia. More than half of its voters live in the suburbs that stretch from extremely affluent northern Virginia down to Norfolk. Many of these voters emigrated from the North and Midwest. They fit the profile of the baby-boom voter, socially liberal and fiscally conservative.

The Democrats have built a coalition of the white suburbanites and blacks while holding onto a portion of the old rural Democratic vote. This coalition accounted for Robb's victory in 1981, and the sweep of the Virginia Statehouse in 1985 by Wilder, Gov. Gerard Baliles and Attorney General Mary Sue Terry.

The Republicans have accommodated the Democrats by drawing together the most politically retrograde and numerically insignificant segments of the state. Coleman, Wilder's opponent, was central to this Republican strategy. In 1977, Coleman became attorney general by running as a moderate pro-civil rights Republican against a conservative Democrat. But as he prepared for the 1981 governor's race, Coleman fell under the spell of Reagan Republicans who wanted to build an alliance with segregationist Democrats and right-wing evangelicals. He repudiated his earlier support for extension of the Voting Rights Act and for a holiday for Martin Luther King Jr. and became outspokenly anti-abortion.

One incident in Wilder's 1985 campaign for the lieutenant governorship illustrates how Virginia politics has changed. At a rally for Wilder's opponent, a prominent Republican tried to fuel racial resentment against Wilder by bringing up a 15-year-old Wilder speech attacking Virginia's slave-era state song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny." Ac-

Virginia gets chance to exhibit true colors

cording to Republican pollster Ed DeBolt, Wilder's support in the northern Virginia suburbs immediately increased 4 to 6 percent, as white-collar voters reacted angrily to Republican racial tactics.

Wilder's current support bears out this pattern of Virginia politics. He does best in the cities and suburbs and worst in the rural areas. Wilder is strongest among 18- to 45-year-old voters—those most likely to be offended by Coleman's social conservatism—and Coleman runs strongest among voters over 55 years old. It is a pattern that, if it were to hold, would lead to the destruction of the Republican Party.

Keeping Jackson away: Wilder, a flamboyant criminal lawyer who ran successfully for the state Senate in 1969, has played a central role in this transformation of Virginia politics. While taking strong civil rights stands—he was one of the first politicians anywhere to back a holiday for Martin Luther King Jr.—he has gained the trust of white voters. Wilder has done this largely by being a conventional politician who has made compromises and alliances and has worked his way up the system.

He has always been identified with civil rights issues, but not with the civil rights movement. During the '70s, he clashed with Richmond's main black organization, the Crusade for Voters, over voter endorsements. Wilder's main advisers were drawn from the white power structure. And in his 1985 campaign for lieutenant governor, he visibly sought the endorsements of the rural, southern Virginia Democrats who had backed George Wallace—a tactic he is repeating this election.

In the '80s, Wilder has kept Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition at arm's length. Wilder did not endorse Jackson in 1984 or 1988, and his aides have told Jackson to keep out of Virginia during this election. "I'm quite certain that if he's interested in being a Washington presence, the place to be a presence would be in Washington," Wilder said at a September 29 press conference.

His discomfort with Jackson stems in part from Jackson's style. Wilder does not like the idea of someone without experience in office running for president, and he doesn't think candidates should base their campaign on one group's support. But Wilder is also far more moderate politically than Jackson. A decorated Korean War veteran, he has been a consistent supporter of military spending and a foe of communist dictatorships. "You can't go around [like Jackson] dancing with Ortega and Castro," Wilder said during an interview last year.

Wilder is probably on the center-right of the national Democratic Party, but still on the left of Virginia politics. In a state where only 15 percent of the workforce belongs to unions, he has backed Virginia's right-to-work laws and opposed collective bargaining for public employees. But in contrast to other Democrats, he backed collective bargaining for the state's teachers and accepted the AFL-CIO's endorsement, rejected by Robb in 1981 and Baliles in 1985.

Since 1985, Wilder has tacked alternately right and left in positioning himself for the governor's race. He repudiated his earlier

opposition to capital punishment and supported a Republican measure to notify parents when teachers suspect students of drug or alcohol use. But he also defied Baliles by supporting the elimination of the state sales tax on food and prescription drugs.

In the ongoing Pittston coal strike, he has tried to distance himself from Baliles, who has sent state troopers to break the strike, by declaring that he is "neutral." Coleman

POLITICS

took Wilder's neutrality as a sign of "his longstanding support for the most extreme elements of the organized labor agenda." When black fraternity students rioted in Virginia Beach over Labor Day, Wilder did not mince words. "What happened this Labor Day will not happen again," Wilder told a Virginia Beach audience September 12. "Violence of this type—of any type—will not be condoned or tolerated while Doug Wilder is governor."

Desperate ads: The election battle is being waged for the most part on television, and so far Wilder is getting the better of his opponent. Coleman, who wanted to paint Wilder as a kind of black Michael Dukakis, began in mid-September by airing a commercial attacking Wilder for voting against capital punishment for murdering a police officer—a vote in 1977, the commercial failed to mention, that Wilder had since repudiated. Wilder fired back immediately with commercials clarifying his own position and attacking Coleman's opposition to abortion. "On the issue of abortion, Marshall Coleman wants to take away your right to choose and give it to the politicians," the Wilder ad proclaimed.

Polls showed that Wilder's abortion commercials were effective, while Coleman's capital punishment ad had no perceivable

impact. With his support sagging, Coleman counterattacked with an ad claiming that Wilder backed a bill allowing defense attorneys to cross-examine rape victims about their sex lives. "The next time Mr. Wilder talks about the rights of women, ask him about this law he tried to pass." Wilder had introduced the bill in 1972 as a favor to a constituent, he later explained, and nine years later had supported a bill protecting rape victims from "unfounded interrogations."

But Coleman's latest offensive appears to be backfiring. At an October 12 meeting of the Virginia chapter of American Women in Radio and Television, three women, including a lifelong Republican, walked out when Coleman repeated during a speech his charges that Wilder was insensitive to women.

The issue of Wilder's race remains, however, the imponderable in the election. If he were white and holding exactly the same views, the Virginia election, like the gubernatorial election in New Jersey, would be over by now. Polls have disclosed, however, that as many as one-third of white voters may not vote for Wilder because of his race.

If the pattern set by Tom Bradley's unsuccessful run for California governor in 1982 holds, Wilder will suffer a previously undetected 5 percent decline in his vote on election day due entirely to his race. If that happens, he will probably lose.

But in Virginia, as Wilder showed in 1985, the issue of race cuts both ways. If the Republicans seem to be courting a backlash, they could themselves be the victim of a backlash in the polls. No one understands this better than Doug Wilder. □

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By Donald N. Unger

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

EARLIER THIS MONTH, ARGENTINE PRESIDENT Carlos Saul Menem finally did what the country had been anticipating since his July inauguration: he pardoned more than 200 military personnel in a move some say was meant to appease an already restless army.

Thirty-nine of them, including 16 generals and two admirals—among them Leopoldo Galtieri, one of the commanders who served as president under the last dictatorship—had been charged with human-rights violations during the period of government-sponsored kidnapping, torture and murder known

ARGENTINA

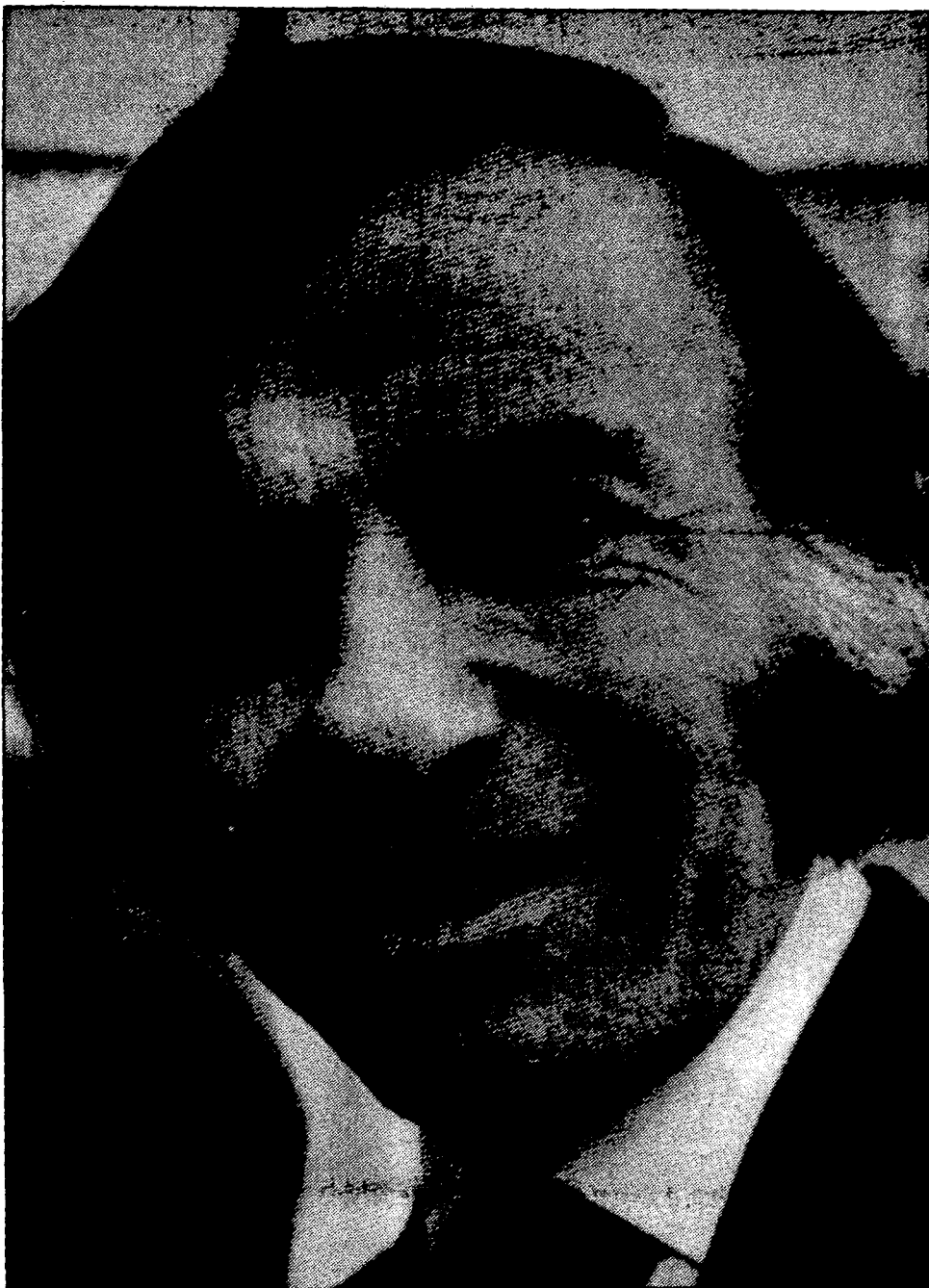
as *la guerra sucia*, or the dirty war. *La guerra sucia* claimed more than 30,000 lives between 1976 and 1983. The others were being prosecuted for three rebellions that took place during the administration of former President Raúl Alfonsín, and for mishandling the Falklands War with Britain. At a time when the economic situation makes it almost impossible for most Argentines to think of the future with any certainty, a large part of the recent past has now been effectively erased. Menem chose not to be in Buenos Aires when the pardons were made public, retreating instead to his home in La Rioja, a province more than 500 miles away. Clearly, his brief honeymoon is over.

Menem has had to address a spate of troubling economic and political problems, from hyperinflation to the recalcitrant armed forces. In both areas—in sharp contrast to the history of Peronism, as well as domestic and international expectations and his own campaign rhetoric—he has chosen remedies and responses characteristic of more orthodox conservative regimes. In doing so, he has alienated his support base among the workers and poor, choosing instead to cater to the industrialists and entrepreneurs. The success of this trickle-down attempt to jumpstart the economy and reassure foreign and domestic investors remains to be seen. What is abundantly clear after the administration's first three months is the price that failure will bring.

In the past half-century, power in Argentina has generally been held by one of three groups—La Unión Cívica Radical, the party of former President Raúl Alfonsín; the Peronists; or the military. The Radicals, a moderate middle-class party, are being blamed for the current economic crisis and have lost much of their credibility. Revelations of corruption in the Alfonsín administration surfaced as soon as Menem assumed power, culminating rather spectacularly with the July arrest of a group of treasury employees charged with using government equipment to run a counterfeiting ring. Given their current troubles, it is unlikely the Radicals will be in a position to take advantage of Menem if his program fails. Thus it appears the only alternative to the Menem government—in the short term—is the military.

Coup insurance: The pardons are seen as an attempt by Menem to at least forestall the very real possibility of a coup. The pardon debate has been going on since Menem's inauguration. It soon became clear that the new president was intent on sweeping the military problems under the carpet as

10 IN THESE TIMES OCTOBER 25-31, 1989



Argentina's President Carlos Saul Menem: the pressure—political and economic—is on.

Coup threat forces Menem to clean slate on 'dirty war'

quickly and quietly as possible. The government's actions revealed two goals. The first is to curtail public outcry and debate over the pardons as much as possible. The second is to disguise caving in to the military as

Menem's actions revealed two goals: to curtail public outcry over the pardons and to disguise caving in to the military as "national reconciliation" and "a time of healing."

"national reconciliation" and "a time of healing." Various trial balloons were floated. A "Reconciliation Mass" was proposed and then rejected. A general amnesty—which would have included the few surviving victims of the repression—was also ruled out. Menem, his Cabinet ministers and high-ranking military officers all began hinting at the president's authority to "deal with the matter personally."

The victims of *la guerra sucia* were largely Peronists—most often young people, members of the Peronist left. Menem himself was imprisoned during this period. It is ironic, then, that a Peronist is issuing the pardons. As recently as December 1986 Menem railed against the very idea of pardons.

"The bottom line for murderers is prison," he said. "Everyone—military or civilian—bears the responsibility for their crimes. No one has the right to forget when what is at issue are the most abhorrent crimes that violate that which is most precious to human dignity. No one—much less a democratically elected government—has the moral right to surreptitiously absolve thieves, torturers and murderers."

A number of high-ranking officers—including the four imprisoned generals who held the presidency between 1976 and 1983—were expressly excluded from the intended pardon when mention was first made of the possibility in early July. This seemed then to represent more of a tactical delay and a public-relations ploy than a definitive refusal. The pardon of one of the four, Galtieri, appears to confirm this, and the Argentine press is reporting that the other three are expected to be pardoned by Christmas.

The evolution of the "military problem"

and the shaping of the discourse around it is in itself instructive. The mainstream press several months ago stopped using the term *la guerra sucia* and began referring instead to "the war against subversion." This in turn was conflated with the Falklands War, which in Argentina is almost universally seen as a just and patriotic cause. To restore honor to the country, it was argued, it was necessary to restore honor to the armed forces.

"Pardon, No!" These arguments for pardons were by no means accepted uncritically. In anticipation of the pardons, larger and larger numbers of people mobilized to voice their disapproval. Graffiti and banners in the capital became more strident. A petition drive was started. Demonstrations and protests proliferated. On September 8 demonstrators held marches and rallies throughout the country, including one in Buenos Aires that drew more than 100,000 people, who chanted, "*Indulto, No!*" or "*Pardon, No!*" Another rally later in the month attracted large numbers of young people and the support of popular musicians. An ominous signal for Menem's government was the large number of Peronists at the rallies, particularly from the Juventud Peronista, the Peronist youth organization.

Meanwhile, in the Plaza de Mayo, *las madres*, the mothers of "the disappeared," and *las abuelas*, the grandmothers of children born in secret detention centers and given to government or military families, walk every Thursday in a solemn circle before the presidential palace. Some have pictures of their children pinned to their clothing. Many wear white kerchiefs on which the names of the missing are stitched. They were not satisfied with Alfonsín's attempts to resolve the issue, and they are outraged by the current government's most recent action.

Another grim reminder of *la guerra sucia* hangs in the atrium of one of the buildings in University City—a banner two stories high with the names of more than 130 *campesinos desaparecidos*, the students and professors who disappeared from one department alone. Looking back on *la guerra sucia*, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Isidro Cáceres recently conceded, "Perhaps there were errors made at that time, even some excesses."

In Argentina, as in many countries, a change of government frequently heralds other changes as well. Jobs change hands, streets are renamed, monuments are replaced. Yet some things are supposed to remain constant—justice paramount among them. Taking down a statue is one thing, dismantling a statute quite another. There is great apprehension about the short- and long-term implications of Menem's actions.

Balancing the political and economic books in Argentina will be a tortuous process, since the roots of the problems run deep. The route Menem has chosen—a national reconciliation that has released murderers from prison and pardoned a handful of radicals, and an economic policy that seeks to right the economy largely on the backs of the workers while returning much of the country's infrastructure to foreign hands—is fraught with danger, both for the country and for Menem himself. □

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DRUG WAR

By Jo Ann Kawell

WASHINGTON

AS TWO HIGH-RANKING PENTAGON OFFICIALS sat down last month in a lofty Capitol Hill hearing room to testify on the military's role in the nation's drug war, the members of the House Armed Services Committee looked satisfied, almost smug. "Last year we had to drag the military to this table," said Rep. Nicholas Mavroules (D-MA), "but we've come a long way."

Indeed they have. Until now, the military's role in the "war on drugs" has been minor, playing backup to police and civilian agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger resisted congressional demands that the armed forces play a bigger part. But on September 5, President George Bush said "the rules have changed" and he was sending "a message to the drug cartel." As he outlined his administration's new drug-control strategy, Bush announced, "We will help any government that wants our help. When requested, we will for the first time make available the appropriate resources of America's armed forces."

Polls show that Americans share Washington's enthusiasm for harsh steps, including military action, to stop the drug flow. Fifty-eight percent of those questioned in a recent *Wall Street Journal*-NBC poll said U.S. troops should be sent to Colombia—home of the "cocaine mafia"—if the Colombian government asks for them.

This wave of public support for military participation in the drug war is fed by the widespread belief that the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines will be able to do what the police haven't: stop crack-dealing gangs in the U.S. and knock out the "drug lords" in Latin America. But, as some administration and Pentagon officials admit, a military victory in the drug war would be neither quick nor certain. What's more, because the cocaine industry has become such a part of economic, social and political life in Latin America, further militarization of the drug war could pull the U.S. into conflicts that go far beyond drugs, including the guerrilla wars in Peru and Colombia.

Quiet expansion: Right now, however, there is no master plan for involving the military in drug control, or even for coordinating Pentagon action with that of civilian agencies such as the DEA. The strategy unveiled on September 5—dubbed the "Bennett Plan" for White House drug-policy director William Bennett—provides only a rough outline of how the strategy will be carried out domestically and internationally. But a closer look at the military's current role in drug control, and the ways that role has expanded over the last few years, shows the areas where the military is likely to be further involved and points up the risks of that involvement.

Despite the public reluctance of Reagan appointee Weinberger and other Pentagon officials to get involved in the drug war in a big way, it was the Reagan administration that began drawing the military into what had been left almost entirely to law enforcement. In April 1986 Ronald Reagan signed a secret national security directive that for the first time officially labeled international drug trafficking a threat to national security. Reagan authorized the use of military resources and personnel in drug-control efforts.

Since then—except for the much-pub-

Sending in army could drag U.S. into morass

licized 1986 Operation Blast Furnace action in Bolivia—the Pentagon's most visible role in the drug war has been border interdiction: stopping drug-carrying planes and boats before they bring their wares into the U.S. Last year, to stem interagency squabbles with the

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Coast Guard and Customs Service, Congress made the Defense Department the "lead agency" responsible for border interdiction. More than half of the \$568 million Pentagon drug-war budget request for 1990 is slated for interdiction.

Although sealing the borders to drug smugglers has great public appeal, many analysts take a dim view of border interdiction. An oft-quoted study by Rand Corporation analyst Peter Reuter found that interdiction has little effect on drug imports in relation to its multimillion-dollar cost. Civil liberties experts have cautioned that allowing military personnel to arrest drug traffickers would erode U.S. law, as well as traditions that make law enforcement the job of the police. And even some ardent advocates of tough action against the drug trade have been squeamish about suggestions that suspected drug planes be shot out of the sky—a job the Pentagon does not want anyway. Assistant Secretary of Defense Stephen Duncan told the House Armed Services Committee.

The U.S. military's growing role in the cocaine-producing Andean nations of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia has received much less public scrutiny. Although few military resources and personnel have yet been committed to the area, expansion of a military

presence could have serious international repercussions. U.S. Special Forces trainers have worked with Bolivia's drug police since 1986, and military trainers quietly began work with Peruvian police several months ago. But the teams' work was little noted in the U.S. until the Bush administration dispatched a group of military advisers to Colombia in the wake of the recent assassination of Colombian presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galan.

Combating rumors: Two days after Galan's murder, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh seemed to hint on NBC's *Meet the Press* that the U.S. might be willing to send troops to Colombia. That touched off speculation that the Bush administration was planning such a move, and a parade of officials tried to quell the rumors. Bush himself said, "There is no contemplation of the use of American armed forces in any combat role there."

In fact, neither the administration nor the Pentagon seems interested in taking such a provocative step, which they realize could undermine present public support for drug-control policy in the U.S. and stir up protests in South America. Instead, they are militarizing the Andean drug war in slow, incremental ways that will keep the U.S. presence small, while relying on local forces to implement U.S. policy goals.

The trend toward militarization is apparent in many areas. Along with increased Pentagon involvement in the drug-control program, the DEA—a civilian agency with a law enforcement mandate—is being transformed into a paramilitary force in Latin America, and the U.S. is attempting to persuade the governments of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia

to further involve their own militaries in drug control.

According to U.S. officials, fewer than 100 DEA agents are now assigned to the Andean countries. Many of these agents have received training in military techniques and operations at the ranger school at Fort Benning, Ga. "The DEA is now operating in a paramilitary environment," says an official of the State Department bureau involved in international drug control. "What we've found is that the DEA and local police need military training."

Right now, the military trainers work largely outside the drug zones with local police. Only DEA and other civilian personnel are supposed to take a direct role in drug operations. But State Department and congressional reports show that some U.S. officials are unhappy with the DEA's performance and believe military skills and outlook are needed to fight the drug war. And Bush reportedly signed a national security directive allowing U.S. military advisers to work in the drug zones—a move that would put them at the drug war's front lines.

The most volatile situation is in Peru's Huallaga Valley, the largest coca-growing zone in the world. Coca leaves are the raw material of cocaine. Guerrillas of the *Sendero Luminoso*, or Shining Path, have organized the area's farmers and now hold political control in the valley. Last February U.S. officials temporarily stopped anti-drug operations there because, they said, they could not guarantee the safety of U.S. personnel working out of Tingo Maria, the valley's largest town. The operations resumed several weeks ago, with the drug police and DEA agents now operating from a newly constructed "secure base" in the Huallaga.

Dangerous liaisons: Until now, U.S. drug-control strategy emphasized coca eradication. But the Bennett Plan downplays eradication because, drug strategists now say, it is ineffective and dangerous for eradication workers. Donald Hamilton of the White House's Drug Control Policy Office says it "can also be self-defeating, driving farmers into the ranks of the insurgents or moving them into more remote areas."

Although the strategists haven't entirely given up on eradication—some still hope to eradicate Peru's coca fields aerially with herbicides—the main targets are now the small labs where coca is converted into cocaine paste and the scattered airstrips from which the paste is flown out of the country.

On paper, there is still a strict division between drug-control and counterinsurgency operations in the Huallaga. But on the ground, such divisions have become impossible to maintain. A growing number of U.S. policymakers believe the guerrillas have become so entrenched in the Huallaga that, as a State Department official puts it, "we need the Peruvian military to secure the area so the police can do the job [of drug control]."

Wresting control of the valley away from the guerrillas would be a major task—one at which Peru's military has so far failed. It has done only slightly better in the vast highland areas where the guerrillas are also active. If the U.S. begins to work more closely with the Peruvian military, it risks becoming embroiled in a bloody nationwide conflict—and it will be working with

Continued on page 22

IN THESE TIMES OCTOBER 25-31, 1989 11

The cocaine industry has become such a part of economic, social and political life in Latin America that further militarization of the drug war could pull the U.S. into conflicts that go far beyond drugs.



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Trading Places: Richard Dennis m

Last year, at the age of 40, Richard Dennis retired from playing the futures markets at the Chicago Board of Trade.

In 1976 the New York Times had crowned Dennis "the king of the pits." He was said to be the biggest individual trader in the world, selling and buying about \$1.5 billion in contracts each year. Though he won't say how much he is worth, it is rumored that before he retired his annual profits from trading futures exceeded \$50 million a year.

Born to a South Side Irish Catholic family, Dennis worked part time as a runner at the Board of Trade during high school. With the money he earned as a runner he bought agricultural futures. And with the money he lost on agricultural futures, he, in effect, purchased a Board of Trade education. After high school, Dennis played the markets and majored in philosophy at DePaul University. Upon graduating, he accepted a fellowship to continue his studies at Tulane University. But New Orleans was too far from the Board of Trade, so two weeks after school had begun, he quit and moved back to Chicago, where he borrowed \$1,600 from his parents to buy a seat on the MidAmerica Commodity Exchange.

Now one of the richest people in Chicago, Dennis leads a private and modest life. Having retired from trading, he is devoting himself and the fortune he has amassed to politicking. In 1985 Dennis, a self-described "liberal with a tinge of libertarianism," told Robert McCorty of the Chicago-based Reader, "I don't consider myself first a commodity trader. As a Chicagoan, I've always been more interested in politics. You can't avoid it if you grew up in the neighborhoods like I did."

Through his private philanthropic foundation, Chicago Resource Center, he helps fund shelters for battered women, AIDS education and treatment programs, and gay and lesbian organizations.

Privately, Dennis has contributed to the campaigns of a variety of Democratic office holders. He was one of the early backers of Chicago's late Mayor Harold Washington. In the last election he supported Richard Daley.

But these days what is occupying Dennis' time and resources is a campaign to "Just say no to the war on drugs." The formerly reclusive futures trader is granting interviews, appearing on local talk shows and bending the ears of Democratic Party leaders. He is putting his money where his mouth is as one of the principal backers of the Drug Policy Foundation of Washington, D.C., an organization that is researching and advocating alternatives to the current war on drugs.

Last month Joel Bleifuss interviewed Dennis in his office at the Board of Trade.

How would you sum up what's going on in the current war on drugs?

We've got a hysteria and a media-driven frenzy caused by some badly inaccurate polls and by politicians plunging into a frenzy of false alarm.

In what way are the polls inaccurate?

First, [drug czar William] Bennett and his friends are high-fiving each other because of the decline in casual use. The way they measure casual use is somebody calls you up on the phone and says, "Hi. How are you? What's your name? Do you use drugs?" In this present environment anybody who would answer that question "yes" must be on something very powerful because they're ignoring the clear and present danger to their health. In this current environment people are probably intimidated about answering questions about favoring legalization in the same way they were in the '50s with Joe McCarthy. So there is a serious question whether polls are accurate in terms of monitoring public opinion. Second, polls elicit a very uninformed knee-jerk reaction. After networks like ABC run a [week-long series titled] "Drugs: A Plague Upon the Land?"—editorializing every minute they pretend to be reporting—it's not surprising that you can drive poll numbers into outer space. When people learn more about the issue I expect the polls will change fairly dramatically. I'm not saying that in six months polls will say a majority of Americans are going to be for legalization, but they will not be looking the way they look now.

You mention McCarthy in the '50s. What are the parallels?

Today there is a group of people who are being made out to be the scapegoats—the casual users, who are said to be, astoundingly enough, accessories to murder. That statement goes unchallenged and is probably the most ridiculous statement in the history of politics, except for when Joe McCarthy stood up and said, "I have in my hand a list of 205 Communists in the State Department." To some extent drugs are replacing Communism as the bogeyman. I think there is a political payoff in having an external threat to rally around, but I don't think we need that.

What about current comparisons being made between the deepening U.S. military involvement in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia and the Vietnam War?

It's a similar approach to a problem. The most obvious thing is that we start out with advisers. It didn't work in Vietnam; we ended up with body bags. There are a lot of reasons to think it will be even less effective in Colombia. Its drug traffickers have more money and are a lot closer to us. They can bring the war home a lot easier.

How are drug users filling the role of scapegoat?

Drug users are being demonized unfairly. We don't say that people who smoke or people who drink are responsible for the deaths of people who get emphysema or cirrhosis of the liver. How rational is it to say that that someone who has \$10 of marijuana is responsible for the death that a crack dealer deals out a thousand miles away? So far we haven't

gotten to the point in this country of thinking that one has a legal responsibility to set a good example. If we believe that, we're all in big trouble. We all have vices, and we're all sinners. I thought we decided a long time ago that there was a difference between sin and crime.

What should be the limits of legalization?

If a drug presents clear and present danger to others, if it causes its users to become a threat they wouldn't be otherwise—say 5 or 10 percent of the time—we should consider making it illegal. They shouldn't be allowed to put themselves in a drug state where they do things that could hurt other people. Crack might be like that. And of course, in the case of kids, it should be illegal to deal all this nasty stuff.

How would a "legal" drug, say marijuana, be marketed?

I would support treating marijuana just like beer. If that means that Anheuser-Busch gets to sell it, it is probably going to do it more efficiently than the government. And in that case the substance is clearly no more dangerous.

What should be done to cut demand?

Education and treatment are the effective ways to cut demand. Every dollar that goes into law enforcement or interdiction is a dollar that ultimately doesn't go into education or treatment.

How would legalization affect the international picture?

If you legalize drugs, you would defund the Colombian drug lords and that would, in time, return those countries to normal.

How is your political philosophy expressed through your efforts?

I'm a chastened liberal who at this point is some sort of small-government liberal. I don't believe the government is the appropriate means to achieve much. After all is said and done, I am in favor of the individual, not the group. I am in favor of individuals having more freedom and large organizations having less intrusions into their lives.

If you hadn't retired from the Board of Trade, you could still be trading and making millions more. Yet here you are in a suite at the Board of Trade politicking about the folly of current drug policy. What motivates you?

I mainly hang out at the Board of Trade out of habit. It's sort of like being at the clubhouse after the ball game. I retired from trading last year, and I'm working on the drug issue practically full time. In this society, like it or not, money is power. And power to a large extent is money, and the more money I've got the more power I'll have. I'm personally piqued by the stupidity of the politics of the current administration.

What role does the Drug Policy Foundation of Washington, D.C., play in the legalization debate?

They have also been working on this field for four or five years. They have a lot of expertise and are the premier organization dealing with drug-law reform at this point. I am funding the Drug Peace Prize, a \$100,000 award that the Drug Policy Foundation will give out every year to the person or organization that is work-

ing to reverse the corrosive and distorted war on drugs. The first award went to Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, who upon being elected came out for a discussion of drug legalization. As the mayor of a big city with a large population of poor people, he understood that the people of Baltimore couldn't afford to keep bearing the costs of keeping drugs illegal. So the foundation basically deals in education about the issue and provides alternatives. The politicking is something I do on my own. As a financial supporter of the Democratic Party, I go around to the people who will listen, and, to the extent that I can make them listen, they hear my point of view.

How have Democratic Party leaders responded?

All politicians are hamstrung by public opinion. There are two mindsets among Democratic officeholders. Those who see an opportunity to look tough on an issue and are playing to the crowd. An example, Joe Biden with his disgraceful attempt to play chicken with Bush about who was going to be tougher and waste more money and lose more lives. Then there is another set of Democratic politicians who would like to come out for a more rational policy, who would like to talk about drawing lines in a more sensible direction, who would like to reverse the direction of the war, but they just don't have enough public support to come around and say that. I've talked to both kinds of politicians.

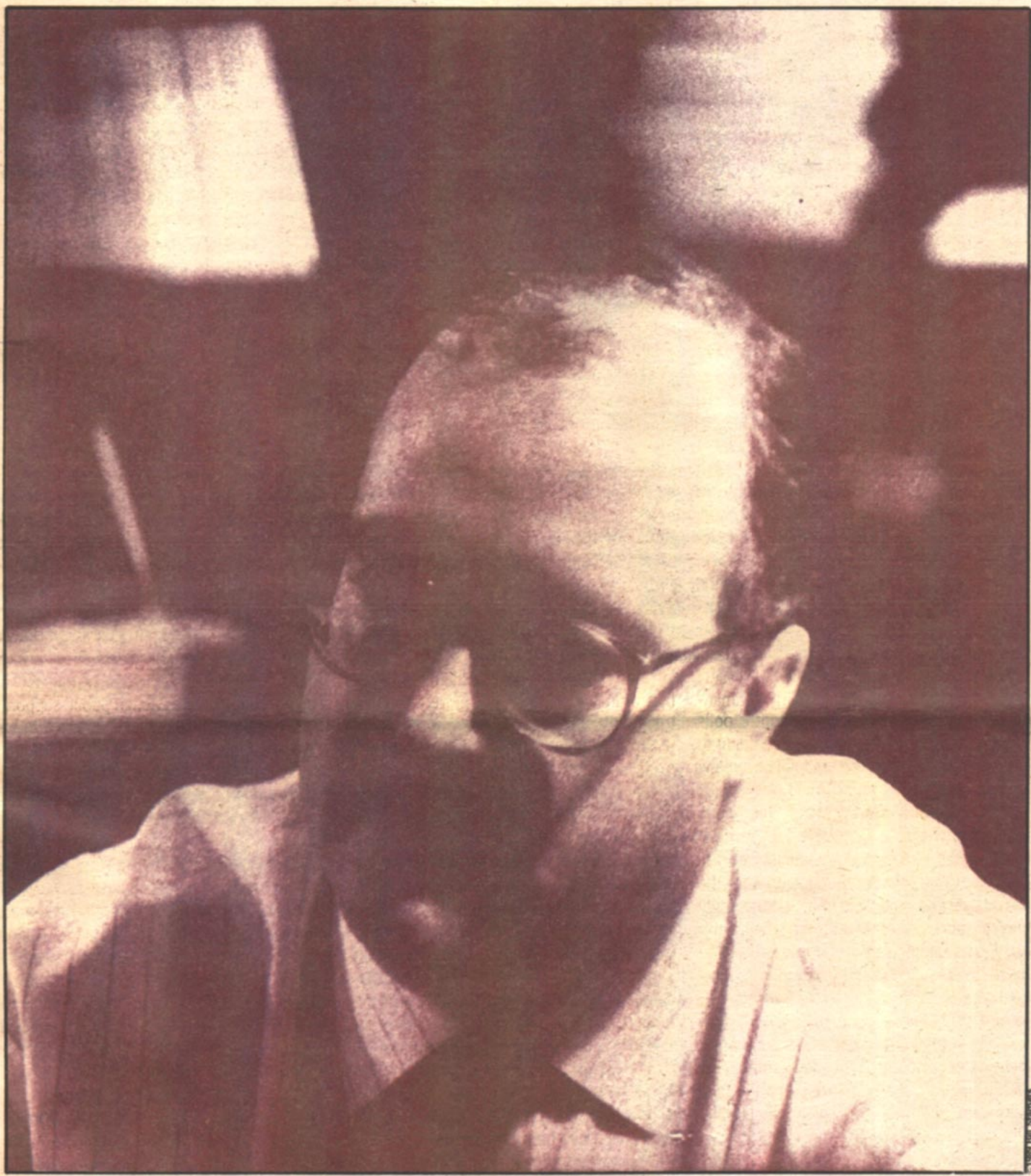
Such as...

I cannot name names, but the fat is still in the fire in terms of how the leadership of the Democratic Party will respond. They now have a public position, but they are groping for something that the leaders believe privately will make more sense than the moral restoration that Bennett talks about. I hope that people will make the practical argument that we can't stand the costs associated with the war on drugs: casual users being a target, drug-related crime continuing because we are not going to end the demand for drugs by addicts no matter what the penalties; the continued empowerment of the Colombian drug lords in our hemisphere, the possibility of a Vietnam-type war. Ultimately the parallels to Prohibition will become so obvious and so painfully clear that the administration's drug policy will fail. It is going to take someone who is willing to stand up and say what almost no one believes before we can get to the point that we have a rational debate. And that is going to take time.

Should the critical response to the war on drugs be guided by a certain political strategy or ideology?

An ideological argument is not going to work. There is an ideological argument on the Bennett side, which is basically a moral authoritarianism, a belief that we need to restore moral order and here is a great issue to start with. What Bennett is trying to do is roll back the '60s. Evidently his date with Janis Joplin was a flop, so he's mad at everything from the Jefferson Airplane to the present that has to do with the '60s. I don't think a liberal or libertarian ideology is going to help us much either. While people in the abstract might buy into

es from the exchange floor to the drug war



that, they are frightened enough that what they want is a practical solution to the problems of drug-related crime—what is going on in Colombia, whether troops will get involved and that sort of thing. They want to deal with it more pragmatically. I'm not a pragmatist at heart, but I am willing to make the argument on strictly pragmatic grounds and not try to do it in a narrow ideological way.

What do your former colleagues at the Board of Trade think of your efforts?

They have always been unfailingly polite, although they have also been in unfailing disagreement with me for the last 15 years on all sorts of political issues. Are there any signs that the political winds might be shifting? Some in the press are beginning to realize that they can play a better role in this than they have. Until now the press has been the government's cheerleader. If we saw a videotape of

this type of propaganda from a country like Nazi Germany, we'd say that's what you expect in a country like that. The press should be more objective and get off the me-too attitude. Clearly the media hype, driven by public opinion, encourages the politicians to be cowardly.

What effect does the war on drugs have on society?

They always say that if you legalize drugs, you send the wrong message. It seems to me that's about 100 percent backwards. The message you send if you legalize some substances is, first, that people are responsible for their own choices and, second, that the government isn't the great power that is going to save them from themselves.

What about the relationship between drugs and the problems of the inner city?

Inner-city poverty is a bigger problem than drugs, and we don't seem to have any means

to deal with it. We have to worry more about the people in the ghetto whose position is aggravated, whose quality of life has deteriorated because of the illegality of drugs: the 10-year-old kid whose only role model is a pusher, the people who live in public housing who are at the mercy of drug dealers empowered by their profits and who use that money to buy Uzis to control whole areas of the city. I have more sympathy for people who aren't on drugs but who essentially are trapped by the people who profit from selling them. It isn't going to help the addict in the ghetto if we legalize drugs, but it sure is going to help everyone else.

You said that you don't believe in government-imposed solutions. Then how should society deal with inner-city poverty?

I'm not saying the government doesn't have a role. But when the government acts, it ought

to have more to do with income maintenance and getting people over the poverty line. Programmatic liberalism, as often as it helps, also traps people and keeps them in self-destructive patterns of behavior. But that is a different question than the drug question. So far, society doesn't appear willing to tax itself to do anything, so it's hard to believe that people are going to raise their taxes to do that. I don't believe anyone has a good answer at this point.

Is there a place in society for mind-altering substances?

That is what people ought to ask themselves. Ultimately the logic of the war on drugs is going to make the Woman's Christian Temperance Union very happy, because the logic of the whole thing is prohibition. That has been tried and proved extremely unrealistic. Among other things, it conflicted with the centuries-old tendency for people to want to alter their consciousness. I think somebody who starts from the premise that we shouldn't alter our consciousness is starting from an impossible position. Mind-altering will always be with us in some form or other—legal, illegal, dangerous, non-dangerous. The trick is to make the damage associated with that as small as possible.

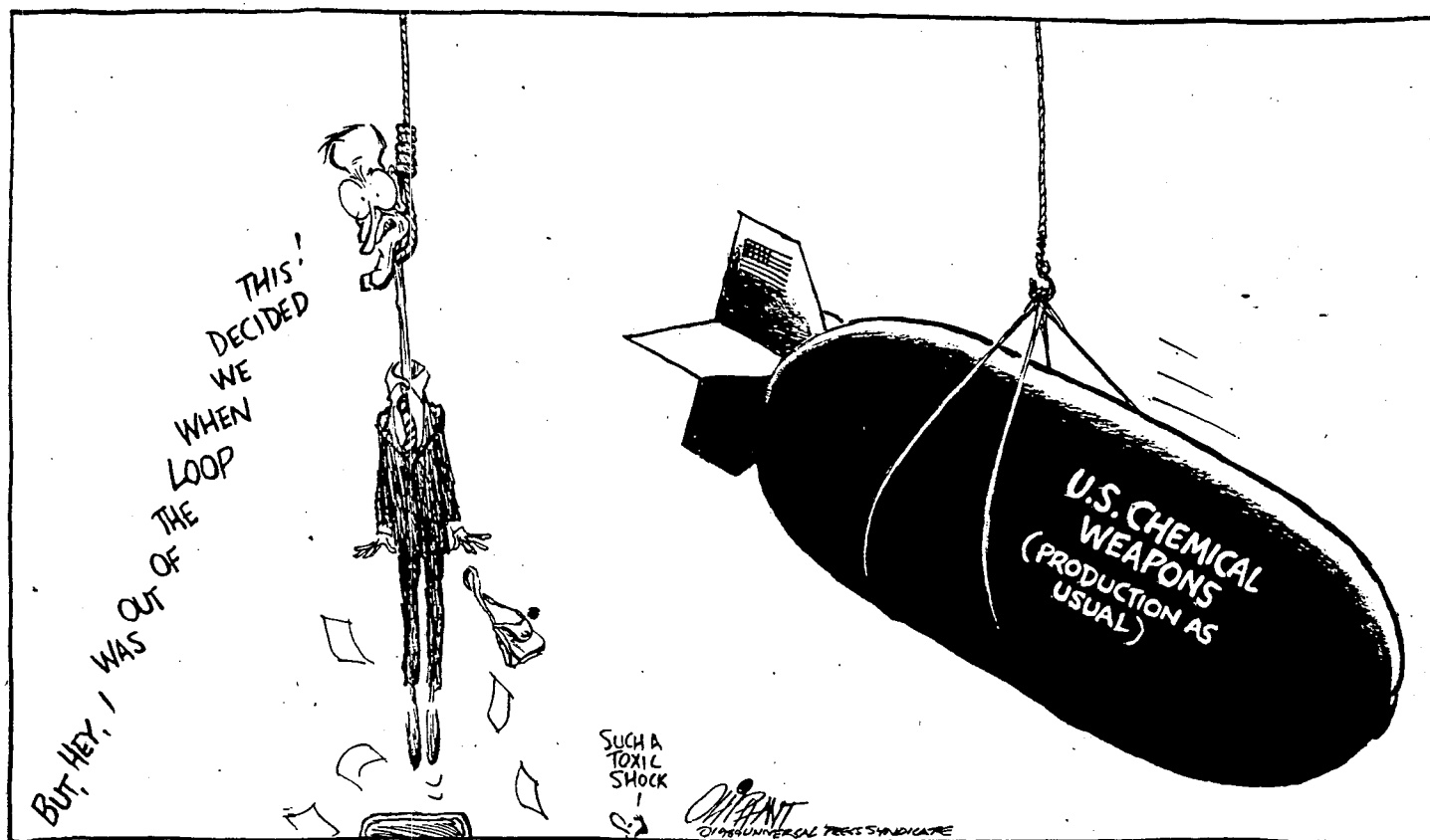
Is there a positive aspect to changing one's consciousness?

Sure. I suppose if you went to a high Mass and got high on the music there is a positive aspect to that. Some people tell me pot is the same as that. I don't know. But I sure don't think you can say that mind-altering per se is bad.

The biggest mistake the administration is making is not to make distinctions. But maybe this is something that they have to do, because otherwise their case is so untenable. They want to talk about drugs and never say which drugs, and talk about users and never say what kind of users, and talk about consequences and never say for whom. This issue ranges from the medical uses of marijuana to selling crack to 10-year-old kids. It's obscene to insist on talking about it all by using the word "drugs." There are all sorts of different illegal drugs—the relatively harmless and the harmful. There are all sorts of different categories of users—addicts, casual users, adults, kids. If we do what the government wants us to do—which is not make those distinctions—we will lose credibility with people when they find out the fruits of those policies. Things as inhumane, for example, as denying people with glaucoma medically prescribed marijuana. Because we're so hysterical, we'll wind up with casual users in jail. When the public answers polls about drugs they think of crack, but eight out of 10 drug users are pot users and it is a heck of a lot easier to chase one of them down than go after someone with an Uzi.

We run the risk of spinning off in the direction of negating a bunch of constitutional rights that may be hard to get back. And we will have done ourselves an incredible damage in the service of an idea that almost never works—the idea that we can save people from themselves. □

EDITORIAL



Bush proposes poisoning international atmosphere

In the past few weeks President Bush has given us a chilling glimpse of the real man behind his "kinder, gentler" facade. It isn't pretty, but given Bush's CIA background and his past love affairs with such sordid characters as Ferdinand Marcos and Manuel Noriega, neither is it a complete surprise. What we see is a president wanting to return to the good old days of CIA assassinations and, apparently, to the continuation of poison gas production.

To kill an opponent: The CIA, which was established after World War II as an instrument of the Cold War, has a rich history of involvement in coups and assassinations, including even the killings of heads of state like the Congo's Patrice Lumumba and Chile's Salvador Allende. But until the '70s most of these activities were covert not only in name but also in the sense that they were unknown to the public. It took the loss of the Vietnam War and Watergate finally to create a climate in which the public demanded to know about its government's secret activities and to curb at least some of them. This led to the strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act in 1974 and to a 1976 presidential directive that says, "No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States government shall engage, or conspire to engage, in assassinations."

This, in the wake of the failed coup in Panama, is what Bush wants to change. It seems the CIA was reluctant to engage in discussions with Panamanian coup plotters for fear an assassination might have resulted, violating standing government policy. And the White House wants to remedy the situation so the CIA will be able to participate in future coups without looking over its shoulder at Congress. If we are to believe administration spokesmen, Bush doesn't want the CIA to violate the law of the land, but he doesn't mind if the United States violates international law as well as the universally accepted principles of international relations.

Fortunately, members of Congress have learned to distrust both the administration and the CIA. That is why the House recently approved legislation requiring the agency to report to Congress on activities developed by the CIA inspector general. And it is why the Senate is moving to make the position of CIA inspector general a statutory one, whose appointment would be subject to senatorial confirmation. Bush, of course, opposes these moves, but we think that the more exposure the CIA gets the less likely it will be to engage in undemocratic activities.

In recent decades, under the guise of fighting for democracy, the United States has become the most lawless of nations, acting as if international law applied to everyone but Americans. In part, this has been a function of the decline of American imperial power. What once could be done with ease and impunity has become increasingly

difficult as even the smallest nations are no longer afraid of the faltering giant. Bush, like his predecessor, has reacted to the situation by moving backward. Of course, his position won't help our nation regain its moral stature. It would be much better for the country's health and world image if the United States took the lead in ending clandestine coups and assassinations and began dealing with other nations as our equals.

Poisoning the gas treaty: In 1969 President Nixon ordered a halt to the production of poison gas, but in 1987 Ronald Reagan began production again—this time of binary gas weapons containing two non-lethal liquids that become lethal when combined. Reagan apparently thought the way to solve a problem is to make it worse, and Bush is following in his footsteps. Reagan ordered his resumption of gas production three years after he had then-Vice President Bush present a draft of a chemical weapons treaty in Geneva that would require each country to cease production of chemical weapons immediately on becoming a party to the treaty. Each country would also have to reveal details of its chemical arms capabilities within 30 days after the treaty went into effect and would have to destroy its chemical weapons within 10 years.

But recently, and in secret, Bush decided to seek a major change in the treaty still being negotiated by 40 nations in Geneva. The change, first reported on October 9 and confirmed by the White House, would allow countries to continue producing poison gas even after they sign the treaty.

Since Bush submitted the 1984 draft, the 40 nations involved in the Geneva negotiations have worked on the assumption that every country would stop producing chemical weapons upon ratifying the treaty. At one point France tried to amend the draft to allow continued production but withdrew the proposal in the face of solid opposition. Bush's new proposal "could really wreck the entire treaty process," says Elissa D. Harris of the Brookings Institution. Allowing countries to continue producing new weapons while destroying old ones, she points out, would terribly complicate the job of verifying an international ban on chemical weapons. Furthermore, Bush's proposal might encourage Third World countries that are not now producing chemical weapons to start before the treaty goes into effect. "If you're producing [chemical weapons] when the treaty enters into force," she argues, "you can continue after. That is clearly an incentive for production now."

In short, Bush is sabotaging his own treaty to ban chemical warfare. This is consistent with his rejection of the Soviet proposal of early September for an immediate halt to chemical weapons production. He, of course, claims that he wants to continue production in order to end it—that more American weapons are needed as a deterrent. The same argument is used to justify the continued testing of nuclear weapons and is equally false when applied to poison gas. The world's greatest power should lead by example, not by intimidation. That doesn't work anymore and only forces others to continue wasting resources on useless production and, in the process, increases international insecurity. It certainly doesn't lead us toward a kinder, gentler world.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100.

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

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This issue (Vol. 13, No. 40) published Oct. 25, 1989, for newsstand sales Oct. 25-31, 1989.



LETTERS

Rockers

SUSAN J. DOUGLAS (ITT, SEPT. 20) BELIEVES mothers must become more "politicized," more vocal in demanding programs and rights necessary to keep parents sane and children well and equal. I agree. The hand that rocks the cradle should rock the boat.

Dianne E. Wahner
Delanco, N.J.

A modern Greek tragedy

FORMER GREEK PRIME MINISTER ANDREAS PAPAN-dreou faces a series of criminal charges ranging from bribery to receiving stolen funds. If the preliminary reports prepared by the parliamentary investigators are accurate and can withstand close scrutiny by defense lawyers, he may well be convicted.

How did it come about that a radical, immensely popular Socialist leader like Papandreou, who received one of the most resounding popular mandates in modern Greek history precisely because he was against the traditional ingrained right-wing patterns of patronage, corruption and kick-backs, ends up falling into the same mold?

Early after his first victory, many overseas Greek and non-Greek professionals and others of Greek descent accepted Papandreou's invitation to return and begin the process of modernizing and reforming Greece's anachronistic institutions. I accepted an offer to head up a research center in Athens designed to prepare studies on Greek development and social structure.

At the start of the first year, there was great élan, energy and idealism as we tackled the entrenched bureaucracies and the inertia of an economy that combined the worst features of statism and laissez-faire economics. The tasks were formidable, and the common political practice of linking public power with personal gain was pervasive. I wrote an article early on entitled "Greece Kleptocracy or Democracy?" But whatever the problems we encountered, we felt we had the backing of Papandreou.

Halfway through the first year, however, some of us began to get uneasy with Papandreou's ties with real-estate interests, his blocking of taxes on unused lands and his concessions to wealthy shipowners. But we were told it was "realism"—change necessitated compromise—and we accepted it and pushed on. By the end of the second year, however, it was clear that Papandreou was moving on a different track, adapting the patronage practices and political use of public enterprises to promote party interests.

Having set aside the party's original program of democratic socialism, Papandreou increasingly relied on rewarding the party faithful and on state spending to secure his electoral base. As his politics changed, so did many of his advisers—critical professionals were replaced by opportunists and conformists who were willing to second any of his decisions in exchange for the perks of office. The socialist movement was turned into an electoral machine, closely tied to the state apparatus, which in turn was subordinated to the personal power of Papandreou.

Critical intellectuals and dissenting trade unionists who provided new ideas and engaged in lively debates were expelled to a chorus of unconditional loyalists. As Papan-

dreou moved toward the old politics, he adopted their methods: phone taps and surveillance techniques practiced by the conservative regimes that preceded him were reintroduced. It is ironic that his present parliamentary accusers include many of the practitioners of the same offenses that he is charged with. Free of political responsibility, enmeshed in the patronage networks of the past, having thrown off any programmatic commitments, personal power and wealth became the primary goals of the regime. A powerful and idealistic but self-centered reformer had brought the government full circle; a long line of realistic compromises appears to have been transformed into a crime of state, a modern version of an ancient tragedy.

James Petras
Binghamton, N.Y.

Parasites of the world

ALTHOUGH I USUALLY ADMIRE ALEXANDER COCK-burn's commentaries and I have my own criticisms of public television, his elitist tirade (ITT, Sept. 27) in response to a membership appeal from WNET deserves comment.

I have very recently moved to Montana Public Television, but I worked in public broadcasting for nearly 15 years, the vast majority of which was with Pacifica Radio, an organization that Cockburn has spoken approvingly of in the past.

Cockburn should come out to Big Sky (or other rural areas) to see for himself that no one here at Montana Public Television (the last of 50 states to get a public television station) is overpaid or a bureaucrat. This is true of the vast majority of public broadcasting stations.

His contention that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's exclusive function is to keep any "contentious or interesting material from the airwaves" is patently false. Witness the recent furor over "Day of Rage," which WNET, despite the wraparound sop to the pro-Zionist lobby, aired in the face of vehement opposition. In addition, who is he to decide what is interesting to the majority of viewers?

So Cockburn doesn't like MacNeil-Lehrer. Perhaps he prefers the bootlicking prattle issued by Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw every night. As for the corporate underwriting, with \$500,000-plus worth of expenses to run a television station and produce programming, where does he think it's going to come from? The taxpayers cannot be expected to pick up the entire bill, and neither can the member-supporters.

Cockburn seems to take the position that ordinary working people have no interest in the programming that he named in his

article. By accusing public television of elitism, he reveals his own elitist bias. The facts are that public television's audience has grown substantially in recent years, particularly among the "lower" economic strata. Is he saying that they don't like cultural programming or nature shows? That's quite an assumption from the Ivory Tower. It's also wrong.

Programs like *Sesame Street* were developed specifically for the children of this audience. Incidentally, *Shining Time Station* is an excellent, gentle program that teaches positive values. There's time enough to turn a child into the embittered angry adult that Cockburn is.

The other important programs that public television struggles each year to put on the air like *The AIDS Quarterly* will not be aired by commercial television in its zeal to avoid controversy and sell products. Public TV is not above criticism by any means, but we don't make a mockery of our commitment to the public interest.

The need for money in any ongoing enterprise is a fact of life. Hence the need for an ongoing fundraising and development program and the need for many more members. Barely 10 percent of all public television viewers are members of their station. How about Cockburn? He clearly watches a great deal of public television but is not a member. Talk about parasites.

Joseph W. Pastori
Director of Development, Montana
Public Television, Bozeman, Mont.

Birds of a feather?

DO YOU SUPPOSE THIS "EDUCATION PRESIDENT" is willing to teach children that in 1932 German President Paul von Hindenburg—just a year before he elevated Adolf Hitler to chancellor—signed a law prohibiting flag desecration? (RGB 1-1,548 Statutory Criminal Law of Germany, Dec. 19, 1932.)

Brian Zick
Los Angeles

The new socialist realism

IDON'T WANT TO START ANOTHER IN THESE TIMES letter war, but the letters from Luther Conant and Bill Bajczyk defending Jackson Browne's new album on the basis that he is a good lefty (Letters, Oct. 4) disturbed me. In attacking Jeff Salamon's review (they seem to forget it is a music review) they miss his main point: that there is nothing revolutionary or world-changing in rock'n'roll devoid of passion. I too admire Jackson Browne's courage and political values. It is because I support the causes he stands for that I can't stand to see them lost in a sea of platitudes and boring, overpro-

duced music. Browne's strangely faceless record is not only "bad for art," as Salamon points out: it doesn't do justice to the struggles he sings about. If art is to be a force that shapes society and promotes justice, it must be good art, filled with the personal convictions and experiences of the artist. Moreover, a critic has the obligation to judge art on its merit and impact, not on the political leanings of its creator.

Anthony Lacques
Aptos, Calif.

Write on!

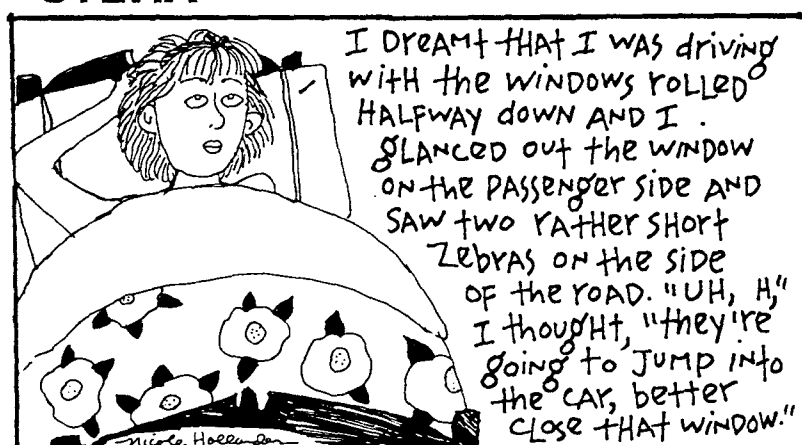
I WAS ANNOYED WITH READERS LUTHER CONANT and Bill Bajczyk, who slammed reviewer Jeff Salamon (Letters, Oct. 4) for his review of Jackson Browne's album. The letters reminded me of the typical fan letters to daily newspapers that denounce a reviewer's panning of a live concert by Metallica, Elton John, Warrant, or any of a host of empty-minded performers. These letters invariably begin with the throwaway line, "I can't believe your reviewer was at the same concert I attended! (Fill in the blank) was righteous, rowdy and had the crowd on its feet! Your reviewer is nuts!"

Many readers of the progressive press share the same misconceptions of reviewers as readers of the daily press. A reviewer is not a fan club member but looks at the strengths and foibles of an artist. I'm a big Jackson Browne fan, but I found *World in Motion* to be a big disappointment after *Lives in the Balance*, precisely because Browne is resorting to too many lefty-shmefty clichés and musical tricks.

Conant seems to think that self-criticism is a bad thing for the left because there are so few leftists. Bullshit. As long as criticism is constructive and not hostile (which was the case with Salamon's review), it is always valuable. As for Conant's reference to "one of very few sources of hope ... available right now," I find it a very pessimistic view of the arts community. There are hundreds of politically aware musicians around right now—some on major labels, many more working for the indies. (I suggest a perusal of a magazine like *Option*, or any of the scores of regional underground fanzines, as a cure for pessimism.) The more effective political artists embed their messages within unique works that resort to fewer clichés than Browne's most recent album. It's true that subtleties are often lost on the American people, but it's also true that a CISPES member bemoaning a litany of imperialism can be as tedious as a right-wing orator—a lesson Browne would do well to learn.

Loring Wirbel
San Carlos, Calif.

SYLVIA



By Steve Brouwer

WE USED TO OPPOSE THE DEATH PENALTY. But as a new century approaches, we must re-examine old ideas and apply fresh logic to the problems of our society. In the '80s there was an orgy of crime, dishonesty and immorality that has shaken the foundations of our society and weakened our economic status in the world. It is time for a deterrent, and some wonderful and effective uses of capital punishment are available to us.

Liberals used to oppose the death penalty on the grounds that civilized people should not stoop to the savage level of those who kill, brutalize and mutilate other human beings. Such a practice, it was said, would only encourage our whole society to sink deeper into barbarism.

Furthermore, careful observers of jurisprudence have noted that the death penalty has shown no deterrent value in discouraging would-be murderers from committing their crimes. It seems that most violent crime occurs among the poor and destitute, who have already been marginalized in American society. These men and women struggle for survival amid conditions so terrible that the prospect of their execution is hardly frightening at all.

Statistics show that the use of capital punishment has never lowered the rate of capital crimes. Quite the opposite seems true: states and localities that favor capital punishment continue to have higher rates of violent crime than places that long ago prohibited the government from taking human life.

None of this has changed. Yet we have changed our minds because we have discovered the outstanding inadequacy of the death penalty as previously applied to our population: the wrong people were executed. Obviously if the threat of execution is to have a deterrent effect, it must be used against those whose crimes are immense and whose fear of death is still functional.

Crime and punishment: Thus I offer the following modest proposal for disposing of the criminal element.

Unlike poor criminals, the rich are not indifferent to death and discomfort; in fact, much of their effort is spent on surrounding themselves with luxuries to balm their sensitive souls and bodies. In deference to these delicate lawbreakers, we now send a few of them to special comfort-laden prisons for brief vacations from their activities so they can return to their offices refreshed



Free-market vampires deserve stake from society

and ready to rob us blind again. We ought to kill them instead.

Nothing will deter an unemployed youth on a Washington street corner from trying to pull some minor deal in drugs, but the banker who lives in suburban Virginia and launders money for the big-time cocaine merchants is another story. The scale of his crime is huge, both in the physical dam-

Unlike poor criminals, the rich are not indifferent to death and discomfort.

age done to thousands of young coke-heads and in the economic damage perpetrated on a nation that no longer has the funds to invest in productive activity. One or two public executions of bankers by guillotine in Lafayette Square, across from the White House, would provide excellent public entertainment. Better yet, it would actually deter crime, which is what most Americans seem to be seeking.

Of course, we need to institute the one method for tracking down the real drug

criminals that George Bush has not provided—a wide-open look at bank holdings and money transfers, whether in cash, by wire or on the fax machine. America doesn't need drug testing and lie detector tests; it needs open books on the nation's banks. No doubt we will discover crimes and waste of a type we can hardly imagine. If we follow the money trail, then the blood will really flow.

Wasn't it our beloved czar, William Bennett, who wondered aloud about chopping off the heads of the biggest drug dealers, presumably for the moral edification of the young czardines and their friends? If only he would add logic to his dogged determination to rid our society of its uppermost scum, he could add other equally deserving criminals to his list. For we must remember that the drug lords from Medellin and their many imitators are only a small fraction of the free-market vampires who have sucked America dry in the last 10 years.

A whole generation of corporate addicts are so hooked on "junk bonds" that their debilitated corporations do not have the strength to do battle with the Germans and Japanese. Why did Ivan Boesky get off with a measly \$100 million fine when he drained off many more billions of dollars and cost

many more thousands of jobs than the salesmanship of the top Colombian drug-pin? As for Michael Milken, who stole an incredible \$550 million a year to satisfy his own illicit cravings, would he have dared to sell all that highflying, juiced-up financing if he knew the penalty was hanging, electrocution or being dropped out of a helicopter?

And what's the proper style of execution for James Watt, who helped weaken our nation's forests with regular doses of acid rain, then moved on to accept \$350,000 for five minutes' "work" making deals with impressionable youth at Housing and Urban Development? If Watt had been warned that he would be hung from the highest blue spruce in Colorado or thrown alive into a giant cement mixer in South Chicago, we suspect he would have been suitably deterred.

The greatest crime: Major drug traffic in this country could not take place without the connivance of our financial institutions and the people who run them. These are the people who committed even bigger crimes against the future of America—the savings and loan scam and all the other financial fraud that could doom all of our children and our grandchildren, even the white kids, to lifetimes of debt and poverty.

The recent savings and loan bailout, said the House banking subcommittee, could cost us \$335 billion over the next 30 years. In 70 percent of the S&L failures, according to the *Washington Post*, fraud was involved. Do you know of any S&L officers or directors who have been lined up against their vaults and shot? Talk about lily-livered prosecutors and slap-on-the-wrist enforcement: not only were these guys never charged with any crimes, none of them was even taken down to the station and slapped around.

If we didn't trust our national leaders so much, we might begin to suspect that they were trying to distract us from the great crimes in high places by hooting and hollering about the war on drugs. If only they could get down to business with a few televised executions next year: a junk-bond dealer and a corporate raider one week, a money launderer and a corporate polluter the next.

Use your imagination; just be sure to make the punishment fit the crime. ■

Steve Brouwer is a writer and illustrator. His recent book, *Sharing the Pie: A Disturbing Picture of the U.S. Economy in the 1980s*, is published by Big Picture Books.

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Killers

From a Colombian intelligence document, prepared over a year ago, on July 20, 1988, and published in a Pax Christi report on Colombia, comes interesting data about the nationalities of trainers of the narco-assassins: "The subjects discussed usually meet with Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez and other drug traffickers in the interior of the Ciénaga de Palagua, where the 'cartel,' on an island termed by them 'fantasy island,' owns a recreation farm conditioned for such encounters. Access is prohibited to foreign persons without the explicit permission of the organization."

According to the source, the drug traffickers possess small submarines in order to escape towards the Magdalena River in case of emergency, as well as two-man high-speed boats. The training camps for hired assassins are located at the following places: 1. El Ariza 2. Guineal 3. Casa Loma 4. Las Paloma, between Puerto Boyaca and Otanche.

"In these places there are large coca plantations and sophisticated laboratories for the production of alkaloids. Occasionally the assassins wear dark blue uniforms, similar to those used by customs agents or prison guards. At the training camps, the presence of Israeli, German and North American instructors has been detected."

After 163 drug-related stories on the three major networks in a two-week period following President Bush's speech, Ted Koppel rounded up the usual suspects to

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

discuss "pack journalism," otherwise known as the propensity of the U.S. press to say the same thing in the same way for the same length of time and then simultaneously move to another topic, about which the same things are said in the same—but you get the idea. It's called the free press.

Characteristic of the gloomy tenor of the proceedings in that particular Koppel show was the final verdict of Lawrence Grossman, former executive producer of NBC's *Nightly News*: "As long as we have television and newspapers now seeking to reach all [!] of the people in a community, then we're all going to be exactly alike. In a time when we had a passionate, highly partisan, independent and individualistic press, then people went their own ways. But I fear that won't happen."

After these curious observations, Michael Deaver, who supervised the media during the first part of the Reagan era, remarked, "Well, if the television media, particularly, would quit wringing their hands about this and perhaps donate, free of commercial time, a couple of hours a week to public service where they could get into some of these issue, in education and drugs, plan about this on a long-range basis, do some forward strategic planning about what they're going to show on television, and think about the rest of it as entertainment

because that's what it is, not journalism, I think we'd all be better served." At which point the show came to an abrupt end.

Since the U.S. press is no longer concerned with what it used to call "terrorism" (acts of political violence distasteful to the U.S. government and its circumambient pack of reporters), no interest has been stirred by the possibility, discussed in the European press, that a plan, in which U.S. higher-ups have been involved, to assassinate President Khadafy of Libya went awry and instead 81 people plunged to their deaths into the Mediterranean north of Palermo

Saying the same thing in the same way for the same length of time—it's called the free press.

nine years ago, on June 27, 1980, when a missile struck an Itavia DC-9 commercial plane flying from Bologna to Palermo. That same day a Libyan civilian plane flying from Tripoli to Warsaw had been granted over-flight rights by the Italians. Air controllers listed it as a "V-6" flight, a code designation meaning top officials were on board. But just before the Libyan plane was to reach

Ustica, a small city north of Sicily, the pilot changed course and landed in Malta.

At the time the DC-9 exploded and fell into the sea near Ustica. The first reports blamed the disaster on structural failure of the plane. Itavia, already ailing financially, collapsed and was taken over by Alitalia. But a day later General Saverio Rana, head of Italy's aeronautics board, told the minister of transport that radar had tracked an unknown plane approaching the DC-9 and a missile had been fired. The commission of experts convened by the Italian government reported last year that beyond doubt a missile had downed the DC-9. In November 1980, an expert of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board said that from tapes at Fiumicino Airport near Rome he had been able to identify another plane, as well as objects that could have been missiles, in the area at the same time as the crash.

There are other complicating factors. A month after the crash the wreckage of a Libyan fighter was found in Calabria, but one of the Italian doctors examining the pilot's body said the crash could have occurred as early as June 27. In mid-September this year the Italian press was speculating that the DC-9 had been shot down by a NATO power, and the U.S. and France, as well as NATO itself, had to issue denials. The Libyans claim they have evidence showing the plane was shot down by an American plane but have not produced any confirming materials.

Distributed by the LA Weekly.

Wall Street

Continued from page 3

Once word leaked that the UAL deal was dead, the markets panicked. Speculators who had bought UAL stock on the "margin"—meaning they had bought the stock with borrowed money—rushed to sell because they assumed banks would call their loans. Heavy selling caused the trading of UAL stock to be halted; there simply weren't any buyers around.

Then investors began dumping other deal stocks. Confidence in debt-financed deals crumbled. AMR Corp., parent of American Airlines Inc. and subject of a \$7.5 billion bid by real-estate developer Donald Trump, saw its shares plummet 30 points to \$73 over two days of trading. Hilton Hotels Corp., which was auctioning itself, fell \$21 in just one hour.

Corporate raider Carl Icahn, who owns Trans World Airlines and 13 percent of USX (formerly U.S. Steel), lost \$151.2 million on Friday the 13th and saw the future. Icahn admitted to the *Wall Street Journal* that the market accurately reflected growing concern about corporate indebtedness. He told the *Journal* that "there are many [buyouts] where the interest cannot be paid." The party's over, he concluded.

Or is it? Over the last decade, according to some studies, the richest 10 percent in the U.S. have seen their wealth grow by 25 percent, largely due to investment in lucrative takeover stocks and corporate buyouts. The high returns promised by the takeover game still entice and won't be forgone easily. Already, investors and banks are struggling to put the UAL deal back together. Another deal, perhaps less expensive, could be closed by the end of the month.

Late modern U.S. capitalism has also boxed itself into a corner. Americans, urged to consume, are saving less and less of their

income. Wage cutbacks also decreased the amount of money workers had available to save. The U.S. savings rate dove to 3.6 percent in the '80s, compared to a norm of 8.2 percent over the previous three decades. That drove the cost of funds as high as 8 percent, compared to 3.5 percent in Japan.

The high cost of funds forced corporations to use debt as an investment tool in the early '80s. Once corporate raiders saw debt's usefulness, they started buying companies, borrowing billions to pay for them. By selling off parts of the companies or squeezing the workforce, raiders found they could make big profits and pay off debt.

This formula appears to be beginning to backfire. But corporations are hooked on debt, raiders and wealthy investors are addicted to the profits, and labor unions are divided about how to protect their members. Despite the stock market's jitters, it's hard to see how the economy can wean itself from high debt without a deep crash and a commitment from the federal government to stop highly leveraged deals.

Don't count on Washington: Although Democrats in Congress may pass legislation empowering the secretary of transportation to block airline takeovers, the Bush administration seems reluctant to back away from free-market policies. While labor unions seem finally to realize that workers for highly indebted companies suffer, they lack the collective weight to force Bush's hand.

In this environment, pessimism is proper. "Don't expect the stock market to settle down," warns one Dallas-based corporate raider. "There's just too much that could go wrong out there." For a change, the stock market seems to be indicating the economy's true health—down, down, down.

Unfortunately, falling stock prices don't necessarily translate into enlightened public policy.

Kevin Kelly is a Dallas-based journalist.

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3 Frequency of Issue: Weekly, except the first week of January, third week of March and last week of November and December; bi-weekly June through first week in September.		3A No. of Issues Published Annually 41	3B Annual Subscription Price \$34.95
4 Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code) (Not printer) 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, (Cook Co.), IL 60647-9942			
5 Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher (Not printer) 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, (Cook Co.), IL 60647-9942			
6 Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (This item MUST NOT be blank) Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address) James Weinstein, 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647-9942 Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address) James Weinstein, 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647-9942 Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address) Sheryl Larson, 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647-9942			
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A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)		35,100	30,500
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales		1,800	2,230
2. Mail Subscription (Paid and/or requested)		31,800	26,910
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)		33,600	29,140
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies		300	250
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F. Copies Not Distributed 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing		650	523
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IN THESE TIMES OCTOBER 25-31, 1989 17

Traveling light in the U.S. heartland

In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change

By Neil Miller
Atlantic Monthly Press
309 pp., \$18.95

By Mab Segrest

NEIL MILLER'S *IN SEARCH OF Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change* tackles a big subject: the lives of lesbians and gay men in the U.S. in the late '80s. He travels from the urban centers where this decade's political movements emerged to the small towns and countryside where, as he says, "the majority of gay people live anyway."

He commendably sets out to document the lives of lesbians and gay men outside the "well-trodden path through urban gay ghettos," to see whether "the changes that I was seeing [in the white, middle-class gay community in Boston] were taking deeper root ... becoming part of the larger cultural landscape."

The "mainstreaming" changes led him to wonder whether the gay community is "following a pattern of assimilation of ethnic groups and other minorities" and can eventually "have the same options as everyone else." In his own life he moved from a collective household in Boston and a job at the *Gay Community News* to a Victorian house in the suburbs and the more prosperous and "considerably less alternative" *Boston Phoenix*. He does express some discomfort about the people left out of this "increasingly secure gay world"—"women, the poor, people with AIDS, Third World gays, drag queens and adolescents," according to his list.

Small-town news: But Miller's book is valuable for the people it includes: Gene Ulrich, the four-term, openly gay mayor of Bunceton, Mo. (population 418); Lenny, the owner

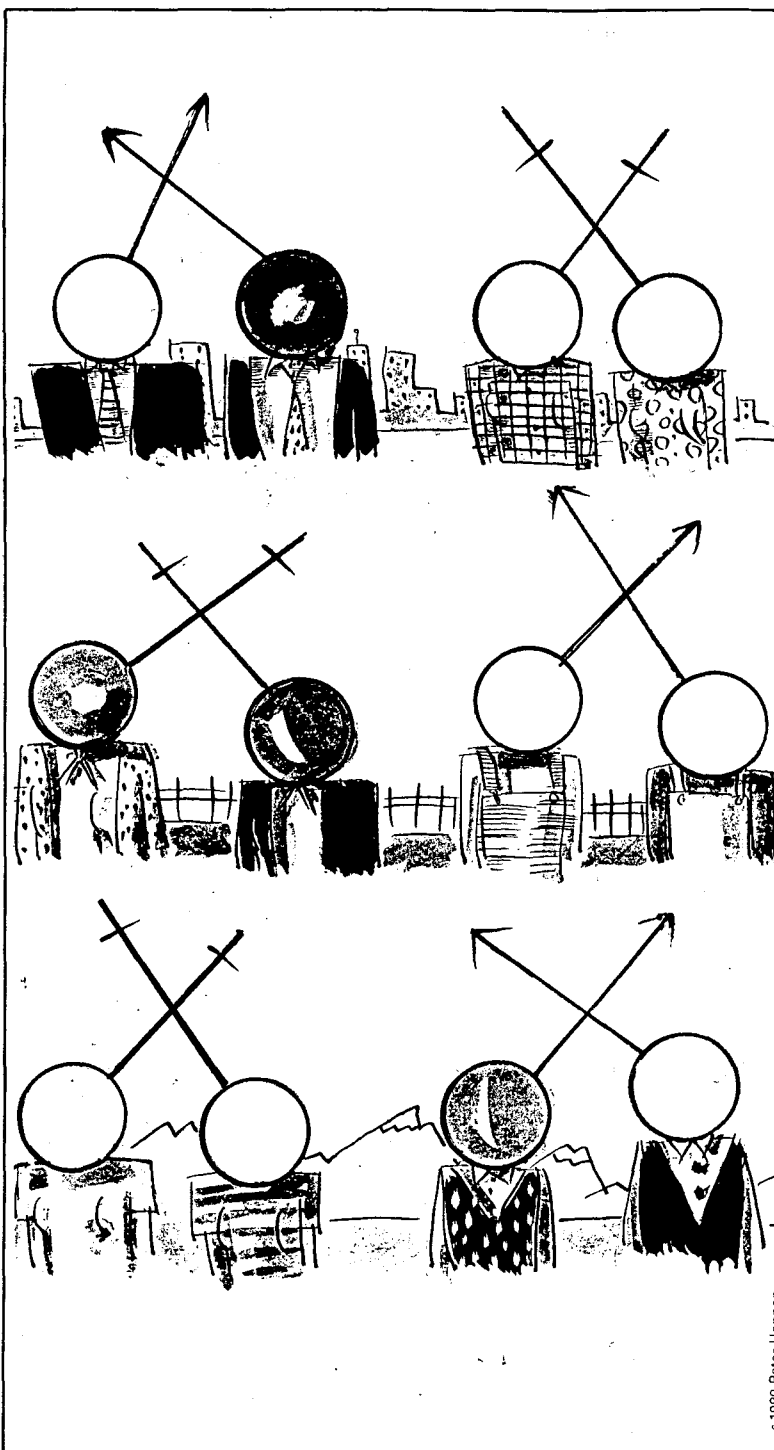
of the only gay bar in North Dakota and president of his church council, where he administers communion to heterosexual parishioners; Mark and John in Wolverton, Minn. (population 200), where the mayor and the entire town council invaded the gay dance they hosted at their restored schoolhouse-community center, so that the next day John had to walk across the street to his father's service station to tell his dad he's gay. Miller also introduces us to Sandy

SEXUALITY

in Bismarck, N.D., whose lover reached over to touch her hand as she was explaining to a gay group how she lost custody of her children—"the first time a gay person had ever touched his or her partner at a public meeting in Bismarck," as well as Lee, the Ojibwa gay man who has begun to talk openly about his sexuality in his sweat lodge; and Irena, the Latina lesbian in San Antonio who, when she was in the military in Korea, went to brunches at the officer's club with high-ranking lesbians.

The report Miller brings is basically optimistic: mid-size cities organizing, a lesbian baby boom, militant AIDS activism, increased community between lesbians and gay men. He writes of small-town and rural gay people claiming their home cultures and being claimed by them, and also of cities like San Francisco evolving the sense of gay men and lesbians as a "people in [our] own right, with distinct family structures, religious, social and cultural institutions," and everywhere the inventiveness so characteristic of the personal lives of lesbians and gay men.

Miller's prose and his sensibility, however, often limit rather than reveal his subject. It's a bit like being on a cross-country trip in a Volkswagen with someone who keeps talking when you just want to meet the peo-



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ple and look at the scenery. When he is most out of his depth the mediating voice veers toward the irritating and pompous, as in his description of a Chicana lesbian, "She still used words incorrectly," or his comments on a black man in Mem-

phis, "He was uneducated and fond of street slang, much of which I didn't understand."

Descriptions of the landscape across which he moves—passages calling for lyrical or athletic syntax—too often fall flat, slowed by too many adjectives and passive verbs. Often he intrudes into descriptions of his interviewees: "The loss of her children might have much to do with what I perceived as her somewhat downcast personality." "I-statements" are great in therapy or fights with your spouse, but in Miller's book they indicate a self-consciousness that keeps him from fully claiming his subject.

Middle-class yardstick: Miller's assimilationist model, also, offers a poor frame for his material. Most obviously, it ghettoizes people of color. The first 170 pages of the book include only five people of color amid 45 or so interviews. Then, in the chapter "Race and Culture," he describes visits to a Black and White Men Together meeting in Memphis, interviews with a lesbian and a gay-

male activist in Minneapolis and visits with Latina lesbians in San Antonio. With "enlightened" white, middle-class gay communities in Boston and San Francisco as his model, he reproaches the cultures of communities of color for how they do not measure up to his yardstick rather than seeking their positive attributes.

He explains that on his trip to San Antonio, "I wanted to look at the impact of Latin cultural traditions, with their rigid notion of sex roles, on Chicana lesbians and gays"—instead of, for example, exploring this subculture's coping strategies for multiple oppressions. He finds Chicana lesbians of color, predictably, "light-years away" from his own white urban base. One may think from the evidence here that substance abuse is only a function of Indian or Chicana gay/lesbian culture, or perhaps that of white gay men in the "hinterlands" of West Virginia. Are there no white alcoholic gay people in Boston?

The trendsetters Miller interviews in order to understand "cutting edge" issues in the gay and lesbian

Miller sets out to document the lives of lesbians and gays outside the urban centers.

community are all white: Sue Hyde, of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, on family issues; National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Jeff Levy and San Francisco writer Armstead Maupin on AIDS; Joan Nestle and Susie Bright on changing lesbian attitudes toward sexuality; and so forth—all people with valuable things to say.

But when Miller does *not* interview black activists and artists like Barbara Smith, Joseph Beam and Audre Lorde; representatives from organizations such as the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays; or Chicana lesbian visionaries like Gloria Anzaldúa—he leaves the impression that gay/lesbian people of color are not as far along on "the continuum" as their white counterparts.

By omitting such brilliant gay and lesbian leaders, he seriously misrepresents the cultural breadth and political depth of the '80s U.S. gay and lesbian movement. To include them would have meant coming to terms with the fact that all people do not have "the same options" in this country and that justice for gay people and everyone else is considerably more complicated than Neil Miller has been able to imagine. ■

Mab Segrest is a long-time lesbian activist and writer who lives in Durham, N.C.

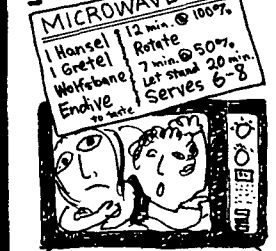


Nouvelle Cronyism

New Products



Time Savers





FICTION

Eritrean teenage boys and girls go through the paces with wooden guns until it's time for the real thing.

To Asmara

By Thomas Keneally
Warner Books, 290 pp., \$18.95

By James North

To Canterbury in the trenches

IN EARLIER DAYS, BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY and jet planes, one of the novel's functions was to introduce readers to the customs and landscapes of unfamiliar peoples and distant lands. Joseph Conrad portrayed life in the tropical latitudes, and Herman Melville interrupted *Moby-Dick* with frequent asides on the technical aspects of whaling. In our present minimalist literacy world, such work is considered somehow outdated, best left to the *Smithsonian* or *National Geographic*. Too many descriptive adjectives would disturb the lean, cool atmosphere in stories by people like Raymond Carver or Ann Beattie, writers whose search for the exotic

usually takes them no farther than the newer American suburbs.

The Australian writer Thomas Keneally thus sets for himself an ambitious and old-fashioned task. He is writing about a war in the Horn of Africa in which the people of the place called Eritrea have been fighting for decades to win their independence from the Ethiopian state to which they were forcibly joined in 1952. Emperor Haile Selassie, supplied by the Americans, made war against them first; since the mid-'70s, the military regime of Col. Mengistu, which calls itself Marxist-Leninist and which is aided by the Soviet

Union and Cuba, has continued to try to crush them. It is a brutal conflict on a vast scale, but Keneally notes that it might as well be taking place on the dark side of the moon for all the notice it gets.

Into this war come a group of Westerners, pilgrims trekking toward their different ideas of Canterbury. Timothy Darcy, the middle-aged Australian newsman, is fleeing a failed marriage and an even larger sense of defeat. Christine Malmédy, a young French woman, is searching for her faintly remembered father, a legendary cinematographer who long ago cast "objectivity" aside and

joined the guerrilla army of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Mark Henry, the American relief worker, grows increasingly disagreeable without apparent reason.

This underground nocturnal civilization has developed extensive educational and medical systems.

Lady Julia Ashmore-Smith, an older woman, the widow of a British colonial official and a feminist, hopes to confirm reports that the Eritreans have ended the ancient practice of mutilating their women's sexual organs, a custom prevalent across much of North Africa that is sometimes erroneously called "circumcision."

Keneally's description of the crumpled mountainous setting is brilliant, more effective than a mere photograph because it includes the heat and the dust and the sense of timelessness. The travelers lurch down a road that is "a scarcely perceived rumor." Even a cup of coffee can evoke larger meanings: "The brew she had made us was sweet and acrid and strong as malt whiskey. It had an ancient taste: commerce, bazaars and the dominance of the sun were there."

Life during wartime: The pilgrims find an Eritrean revolutionary movement that is almost unbelievably dedicated and compassionate. The Eritreans have built a system of trenches nearly 200 miles long and a camouflaged rabbit warren of bunkers to protect themselves from the bombing, strafing and napalm raids by the Ethiopian air force's Soviet-supplied MIG warplanes. This underground, nocturnal civilization has developed an extensive system of schooling for men, women and children, and a sophisticated medical system in which the guerrillas manufacture their own antibiotics and perform complex operations on their wounded. They appear not to have been embittered by the long war, and their treatment of Ethiopian prisoners is generous and humane.

Some of Keneally's pilgrims fear at first that the guerrillas are treating them to a stage-managed propaganda trick. In a century characterized by the repeated, brutal betrayals of revolutionary hopes in other places, the Eritreans may sound too good to be true. But the few other outsiders who have gone there, like the energetic journalist Dan Connell and the French writer Gerard Chaliand, could confirm the basic outlines of Keneally's depiction.

This book leaves one great question unanswered: what is it about Eritrea in general and the EPLF in particular that has produced a revolutionary movement that seems, so far, to be so exemplary? Keneally (who spent three months there him-

self) does not really try to get inside the heads of the Eritrean characters; they are sketched beautifully, but from the outside. There is the suggestion, one of the major themes of the book, that they have suffered so much from the decades of war and torture that their experience has placed them on the other side of a barrier that is impassable to the Western pilgrims, and, by extension, to us.

The question may have to wait until Eritreans have time to write about it themselves. In the meantime, Thomas Keneally has not been afraid to trust them and to lend his considerable skill and passion to telling us something of their lives. **James North**, *In These Times'* former South African correspondent, is author of *Freedom Rising*.



Mingus/Mingus: Two Memoirs

by Janet Coleman & Al Young
Creative Arts Book Company
164 pp., \$14.95

Janet Coleman and Al Young have produced a tender and affective memoir of Charlie Mingus' music and humanity. Without glossing over Mingus' celebrated love of excess, both writers manage to convey a sense of the liveliness, joy and almost Promethean avidity that lay beneath it.

Given the nature of biographical memoir, it is inevitable that at a number of points Coleman and Young treat the same incidents. In particular, the two memoirs' accounts of Mingus' multifarious offers of the editorship of his autobiography play off one another like well-constructed solos ringing interesting variations on the same changes. This demonstration of Mingus' ability, even in death, to inspire good ensemble work may be, more than anything else, what these memoirs are about.

Neither of these accounts is a definitive biography; both are essentially personal testimonies to the way the writer's lives were touched by Mingus' own. This very personal quality risks much. In more than one instance, what at first appears mere sentimentality soon reveals itself as a merciless portrait of Young and Coleman's younger selves. As a means of recording Mingus' extramusical ability to touch others, the risk pays off.

—Fred Little

Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics

By Robert C. Paehlke
Yale University Press
325 pp., \$25

A great deal of writing has been published within the last generation that can be called environmental. This includes scientific findings, research reports and projections of future trends, as well as analyses of alternative energy sources, materials use patterns, sustainable agriculture systems and proposals for economic development. Political science and environmental studies professor Robert Paehlke, in this ambitious new work, seeks to review and summarize many of the diverse perspectives that fall under the rubric of environmentalism. He strives to show how this consciousness can develop into a political outlook.

Paehlke points out that many



environmentally aware people who were inclined to withdraw from the mainstream found that "the consumer society eventually came calling even if one had not left a forwarding address." He stresses the need for a new, vital political alignment that emphasizes environmental priorities. He maintains that environmentalism is not a position on the traditional left-right spectrum but actually another whole dimension of values—values which must be incorporated into economic policy.

Paehlke's academic style—while thorough, accurate and fair—is perhaps too carefully unemotional and theoretical to reach a wide audience. Yet Paehlke's assessment of our pre-

dicament is astute. He clarifies much in his description of the historical evolution of environmentalism and political-economic ideologies.

For example, Paehlke writes, "Neoconservatism might be characterized as military Keynesianism, government debt incurred to pump money into the hands of corporations.... In the U.S. the neoconservative commitment to military spending assumes that resources and environmental problems will not be addressed in the near future."

Paehlke—neither a utopian idealist nor a prophet of doom—feels that social evolution has a better prospect than revolution for getting us through the difficult times that lie ahead. And on this score his book may help enlarge our view of political affairs and environmental imperatives.

—John Kostick



Nicaragua's many musical cultures come together in Mancotal.

Mancotal's agit-pop Nica-folk fusion

By J. Poet

MANCOTAL, LED BY SINGER-songwriter Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy, is Nicaragua's most popular band. Mancotal mixes salsa, rock, calypso, jazz, the folkloric music of Nicaragua and other Caribbean rhythms to create their own unique brand of Nueva Cancion—the politically conscious music that's helped fuel Latin America's cultural and political resistance since the mid-'70s.

Even before the revolution, Luis Enrique Godoy was writing and playing politically charged music, dreaming about a band that would combine all of his country's diverse musical influences. After the Sandinista victory, Godoy got his chance. He gathered players with jazz, salsa, classical and rock backgrounds and set about the task of creating a style rooted in Nicaraguan tradition but global in its musical and political outlook.

Since 1979 the group, with Godoy as lead vocalist and composer, has recorded five albums, including *Son Para Mi Pueblo* and their recent *Amando En Tiempo de Guerra* (*Living in Times of War*) released here by Redwood Records. Mancotal is on the road seven months of every year. Like most of Mancotal's past American tours, this year's tour (which ends this month) was touch and go until the last minute, thanks to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), a bureaucracy known for its hostility to musicians and writers whose views clash with the Reagan/Bush conception of "reality."

Orchestrating the red tape: After a week of frantic phone calls from his friends in the U.S., Godoy was finally granted an artist's visa

and took a last-minute flight from Managua to Seattle, where the rest of Mancotal was rehearsing for the tour. Godoy, speaking through translator Amy Bank, told *In These Times* about the part that music plays in Nicaragua's postrevolutionary cultural process.

I asked about the INS. Mancotal plays frequent American gigs, yet every time Godoy applies for a visa

MUSIC

he has to wade through miles of red tape. "I think it's mainly a bureaucratic problem," Godoy said. "They don't know me or my music, but they do know Nicaragua, and the U.S. government feels they have a right to deny [its people] access to the rest of the world. I don't think the American people are afraid of our music, but [the government is] suspicious of anything with an international outlook, anything that reaffirms the solidarity between working people."

Godoy, the third of seven children, was born in Somoto, a town in northern Nicaragua "about 44 years ago." Godoy's mother sang, his father made his living playing music on the streets and his immediate family was "full of artists and musicians. My father knew from experience how hard it was to make a living at music. He told me he wanted me to be a doctor or lawyer, something that would assure my future, but in his heart of hearts, I think he was secretly pleased that I wanted to sing and write songs."

The first music Godoy recalls was "Nicaraguan country music. The folkloric songs of the farmers, the *campesinos*. And of course the popular music from Mexico and rock'n'roll from the United States."

"One thing that troubled me, even

then, was the way Nicaraguan culture was overwhelmed by American and Mexican music. I always wanted to take the good parts of the rock and Mexican music and combine them with my own musical roots to make a more modern folkloric sound, because I felt that people were developing a dependency on the worst kind of commercial, sexist, American popular music." But Godoy was growing up in the days of Somoza, and this kind of fusion wasn't possible.

"In those days," Godoy said, "musicians weren't considered professional workers. Folkloric music was marginalized, repressed and persecuted. If your songs expressed ideas the dictatorship didn't like, you were censored. Some singers were even put in prison. There was no Nicaraguan music on the radio, only American popular songs."

Pop goes the politics: Even though the climate was dangerous, Godoy pursued his musical interests, learning his craft from the street musicians he knew. In the late '60s he began composing and singing tunes based on Nicaraguan folk music that "drew from the lives of working people and my own experiences. At first I was putting out pop records, but as time went on I became more and more interested in political work, and my music reflected this." Godoy's political tunes

"I understand people's interest in the struggle, but we like to play all kinds of songs."

didn't go unnoticed. In 1974 the government asked him to leave Nicaragua.

"I was composing anti-war songs about Chile and Vietnam," he says, "as well as songs that were harshly critical of Somoza and the repression of the people, so I had to go to Costa Rica." Although Godoy's music was banned in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Argentina and Guatemala, he continued recording, and during his exile he founded Costa Rica's Nueva Cancion movement.

While Godoy's more commercial recordings were being released on CBS in Mexico, the singer was composing revolutionary odes that were smuggled back into Nicaragua—songs about how to clean and care for a rifle or how to plant an explosive charge. "Many people in the struggle didn't know how to read and write," Godoy says, "so we'd make up songs that would teach them skills they needed. We didn't set out to write songs about guns, but they arose spontaneously from the needs of the people. And they were not songs about how to kill but songs that would show them how to defend themselves."

When Somoza was defeated, Godoy returned to Nicaragua and started the project that gave birth to Mancotal. "We developed a Ministry of Culture, to find and train artists, writers and musicians. We started cultural interchanges so people could go abroad and bring back ideas to strengthen their own work, so they could become real professionals. In 1979 I gathered musicians who came from different musical backgrounds and different social sectors. Some had been classically trained at universities, some played folkloric music, some were self-taught rock and jazz musicians, but we were all

interested in experimenting with Nicaraguan folk music, trying to find a way to make music that would be uniquely Nicaraguan. Since then we have been refining and polishing our work."

Of riffing and rhetoric: "When the band started, we toured all over the country, to coffee plantations in the war zone, to factories, farms, fishing villages, everywhere the people were. We brought our music to the people, but it was a difficult task because many people, especially the urban youth, use the popular music from the U.S. as their cultural barometer. We had to challenge people's ideas and show them how that kind of music had been dominating us."

Mancotal's music, a red-hot blend of salsa, rock and jazz, has made them famous throughout Europe and Latin America, but Godoy feels that writers often concentrate on the band's fiery lyrics. "I understand people's interest in the revolutionary struggle. Because of what Nicaragua stands for, they often request revolutionary songs, but we like to play all kinds of songs, even love songs. We have many songs that are direct and intimate, stories of personal struggles. In the last few years we've been making an effort to play them too."

The problems the Sandinista government is having with the Mosquito Indians and other indigenous groups get big play in the American press. When I asked Godoy if Mancotal's message of musical and national unity could help resolve those questions, he chuckled.

"This will be a brief answer to a very complicated subject," Godoy answered. "Nicaragua has many different cultures. There is a culture in the north, where I come from, and an Atlantic Coast culture and a Pacific Coast culture. The Atlantic Coast has a very unique music, Nicafricanica, that mixes calypso and Latin music. There are also black and Indian cultural groups. Many of us didn't know these cultures existed, so Somoza exploited these differences and had people fighting against each other. People in the U.S. may know there is an ethnic group called the Mosquito Indians, but they don't know anything about their culture or the problems they face."

"We are concerned with this, because we seek an integrated revolution, one that respects every group, so people can come together and appreciate each other without losing their individual roots. One of the things I want to do in Mancotal is recreate the different kinds of music we have. Not to exploit the music but to introduce people to other cultures so they can appreciate what others have to offer. We try to unify these influences, so we can bring people together in rebellion and happiness."

J. Poet is a music critic living in Berkeley, Calif.

Deck of all knaves: collect the whole set

By Jeff Reid

DESPITE THE WORLD'S RECENT wave of portentous squalor, it sometimes seems like democracy just isn't in the cards. And that's doubly true if you're thinking of the new Friendly Dictators Trading Cards. A stylishly nasty pack of fools from Eclipse Enterprises, the deck features "36 of America's most embarrassing allies," from Hitler and Franco to Noriega and Pinochet.

This macabre psychic intersection of bubblegum baseball cards and tax-supported death squads succeeds on the strength of its own audacity—and artist Bill Sienkiewicz's beautifully twisted portraits. But the deck is a double-edged sword: sharp factoids back the cutting graphics.

The just-the-facts-ma'am text by Dennis Bernstein and Laura Sydel gets the job done and then some. It's important to remember, for instance, that Ford, GM, ITT, DuPont, Chase National Bank and other American companies traded with the Nazis during World War II, or that 60,000 Haitians were killed by the Tonton Macoutes death squads under Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier. You may find that there are U.S.-supported dictators in places where you didn't even know there were places.

Handy mnemonics that these thumbnail sketches are, they also begin to outline the bigger picture. Time after time this century, American foreign interventions done in the name of democracy, freedom and anti-communism served only to promote the opposite. In most cases, the only freedom our multibillion-dollar aid packages and covert-action slush funds has encouraged is the freedom to open a Swiss bank account for a number of lean young sergeants turned fat old generals.

Bernstein and Sydel keep the outrage to a minimum and let the outrageous facts scream for themselves. This also lets Sienkiewicz do his thing. Sometimes it's a full-color splash of Tanguy mindscapes mixed with a Steadmanesque flair for caricature. Other times he offers a pseudo-reverent, truly ghastly spin on LeRoy Neiman. Sienkiewicz is well known in avant-comics circles for his work on *The New Mutants* and *Stray Toasters*. He also had his hand in on *Brought to Light*, the graphic covert-action docudrama.

Sienkiewicz's polymorphous style is well harnessed here. He tucks President Bush in Noriega's Panamanian pocket on one card and blows South Africa's P.W. Botha into a menacing vapor on another. Taiwan's Chiang Kai-Shek is a natty

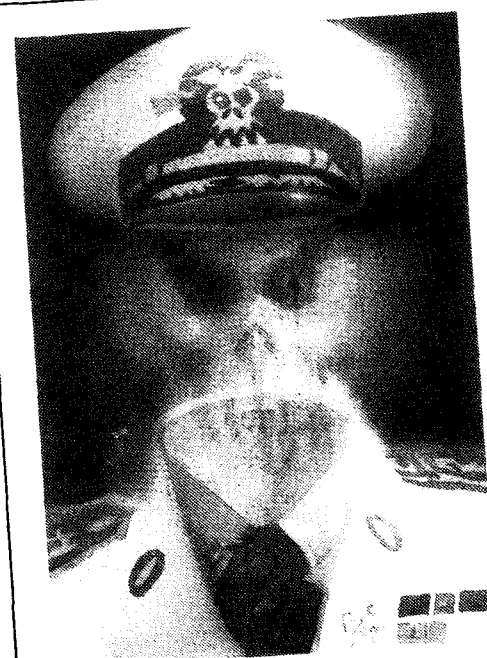
gangster, Brazil's Gen. Humberto Branco is nearly swallowed in his expansive uniform. Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko looks like he is being seen through green pond scum. But on second thought, maybe that's just the color of money, because, as the card's text points out, Mobutu's ill-gotten \$5 billion personal fortune makes him perhaps the only world leader who could pay off his nation's debt with a personal check.

In an age when many Americans don't know Brazil from Bolivia it is perhaps overly ambitious to think folks will be able to assimilate all this information (though bite-sized, the entries are still longer than your average sound bite or *USA Today* "article"). But then again, millions of Americans keep track of arcane trivia like the lifetime stats of Reggie Jackson. Maybe someday the deathcounts of the Friendly Dictators will also be common knowledge. In which case, the hidden face of U.S. government foreign policy duplicity and mayhem will finally be exposed. Then it may be only a matter of time until the whole house of cards comes tumbling down. ■

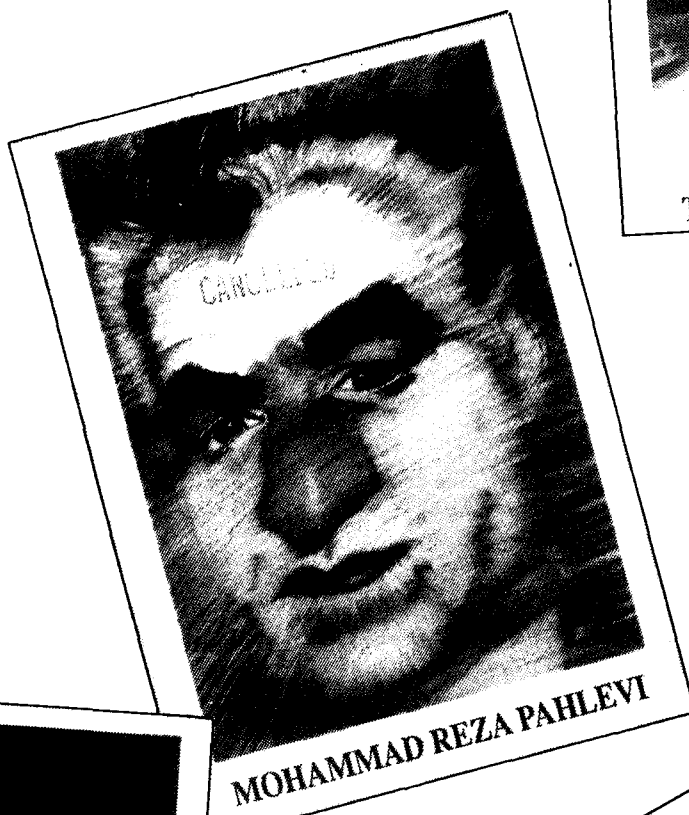
Friendly Dictator Trading Cards are available for \$8.95 from Eclipse Enterprises, Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436.



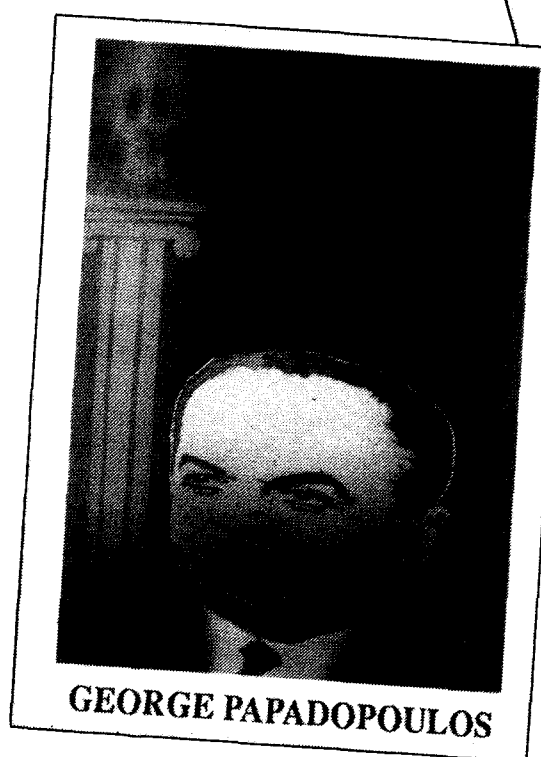
GENERAL MANUEL NORIEGA



THE FRIENDLY DICTATORS



MOHAMMAD REZA PAHLEVI



GEORGE PAPADOPOULOS



FULGENCE



ROBERTO SUAZO CORDOVA

ART

Drug war

Continued from page 11

a group with one of the worst human-rights records on the South American continent. A recent Amnesty International report says that of 15,000 Peruvians who have died as a result of government and guerrilla violence since 1982 "a high proportion" were killed in "extrajudicial execution[s] by governmental forces."

In Colombia, the drug war has become equally murky. Although U.S. personnel so far have little direct role in Colombian drug operations, U.S. military aid has been stepped up; \$65 million in emergency aid began flowing shortly after the Galan assassination. That aid is supposed to go to the drug police, but it must be channeled through the military.

Coletta Youngers of the Washington Office on Latin America warns, "At best this aid will be ineffective. At worst it will end up in the hands of the very ones we are trying to combat" because some members of the Colombian military have been linked to paramilitary death squads organized by the drug traffickers.

The main targets of the death squads are union and peasant organizers and members of the legal left, including more than 1,000 members of the Union Patriótica party. And as in Peru, U.S. officials would like the Colombian military to become more involved in drug control. The military has so far been more interested in counterinsurgency, but the two jobs are compatible in U.S. eyes because several guerrilla groups are active in major Colombian drug- and coca-producing zones.

Bolivia, the world's second-largest coca producer, is calm by comparison, with neither death squads nor armed insurgents roaming the countryside. A forced coca-eradication program, scheduled to begin a few months ago, is on hold. But at the same time, the U.S. military presence in Bolivia has been growing rapidly. Several hundred U.S. troops were brought in to improve the airport at Potosi—a project aimed, according to a State Department official, at expanding the old mining city's "tourism potential." Small teams of military doctors and dentists have also been treating Bolivian villagers as part of a U.S. civic-action program. The official says the program's purpose is "to give people a way of honing their skills in difficult areas." These programs, apparently unconnected to the drug war, have raised concerns in Bolivia about "Hondurization"—that is, that Bolivia will become a base for U.S. military action in the Andean region, as Honduras did in Central America.

"There are a lot of people who are trying to portray [the Andean drug war] as another Vietnam situation," White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said last month. "We want to go to some lengths to knock that down."

Fitzwater may be right that the Andes will never see the massive U.S. troop presence that Vietnam did. But the policy of slowly escalating involvement in the complex conflicts simmering in the Andes may make that region the Bush administration's Central America.

Jo Ann Kawell is a freelance reporter working on a book on U.S. drug policy in the Andean region.

Docudrama

Continued from page 24

Docudramas sometimes even cast key participants. In ABC's *The Preppie Murders*, September's movie about a celebrated 1986 Central Park murder case, the police detective who heard the assailant's confession gets a new name but plays himself. That show also included at least one "composite" scene and much reconstructed dialogue.

The considerable ratings success of docudramas and syndicated "tabloid" or "infotainment" programs hasn't gone unnoticed by traditional network news departments, which have been under orders to popularize their documentaries ever since bottom-line-oriented management took over several years ago.

In July ABC's *World News Tonight* became the target of much public (and some internal) criticism for faking two photos made to look like U.S. diplomat Felix Bloch was handing over government secrets to a foreign agent.

Nation and simulation: In the incident's aftermath, CBS and PBS admitted that they too occasionally simulate news events to heighten a news program's dramatic impact. CBS recently denied charges that footage it broadcast as part of a 1987 documentary on the Afghan war was fake and denied that battle sequences in the film were restaged.

While the numbers of such controversies escalates, the networks have taken to expanding the amount of news and pseudo-news in prime time as a means of avoiding the much higher costs of producing original entertainment programming. By focusing on high-profile personalities and sensational crimes, the traditional red ink of news divisions can be switched to black.

The record number of shows produced by network news divisions this season includes ABC's *PrimeTime Live*, CBS' *Saturday Night with Connie Chung* and NBC's *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*.

The fringe-hour domain of syndicated fare now holds such infotainment series as *Crime-watch Tonight*, *America's Most Wanted*, *Hard Copy*, *Inside Edition*, *A Current Affair*, *Entertainment Tonight* and *USA Today on Television*.

The cumulative effect of these programs on our collective consciousness is impossible to measure, but a recent Gallup poll conducted for Times Mirror suggests it is considerable.

Sixty-four percent of respondents under the age of 30 approved of the use of re-enactments in news programs if properly labeled, compared to 35 percent of those aged 50 or older, reported Howard Rosenberg in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Among all those surveyed, 39 percent considered *A Current Affair* news, 39 percent called it entertainment. Half of those asked felt *America's Most Wanted* was classifiable as news, compared to 28 percent who regard it as entertainment. For *Inside Edition*, the ratio was 36 percent news and 14 percent entertainment.

"Younger people," the report concluded, "who are lighter consumers of news and who were weaned on television rather than newspapers, were much more apt to perceive [infotainment or tabloid shows] as news and not entertainment."

What's unknown is how much of this TV reality will eventually become society's reality. How many of our TV-induced versions of contemporary history will be offset by the influence of fact-based print and radio journalism, or the potentially mitigating effects of school, peers, family, friends, church and other institu-

tions?

For the moment, few are even bothering to raise such questions, let alone provide any answers.

If the trend continues, entertainment and news programs of the future will merge completely, leaving us with a medium totally devoted to a dramatized version of reality. Television has already helped trivialize political campaigns and other events worthy of serious treatment by focusing on personalities, sound bites and photo opportunities. Show-biz news and instant docudramas, as they evolve, may ultimately reduce what little seriousness of purpose remains in TV journalism.

Richard Mahler covers the TV industry for National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*.

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October 25-29

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MUSIC BY ANTHONY COLEMAN; Saturday, Oct. 28; 8 p.m.; \$6.
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November 5

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BALTIMORE, MD

November 10

"Toward the Nineties and Beyond." DSA public meeting featuring Cornel West, journalist Robert Kuttner and others at 8 p.m. at the Baltimore Hilton, 1726 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville (Exit 20 off Beltway). \$3 admission. For more info: DSA, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038, (212) 962-0390.

November 10-12

1989 National Convention of the Democratic Socialists of America at the Baltimore Hilton, 1726 Reisterstown Road, with plenaries, workshops on domestic and international politics featuring Irving Howe, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, James Farmer and others. More information: DSA, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038, (212) 962-0390.

LOVELAND, OH

November 11

"The Challenge of Glasnost: A New World Order Becoming Reality." Albert Einstein said, "Past thinking and methods did not succeed in preventing world wars. Future thinking must prevent wars." Reflections on these thoughts and experiential activities on this theme will be led by Traude Rebmann. She has supervised Peace Volunteers throughout the world for EIRENE, a movement for International Christian Service for Peace. The workshop takes place on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For registration and information contact Grailville, 932 O'Bannonville Road, Loveland, OH 45140-9705, (513) 683-2340.

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LIFE IN HELL

LIFE IN HELL

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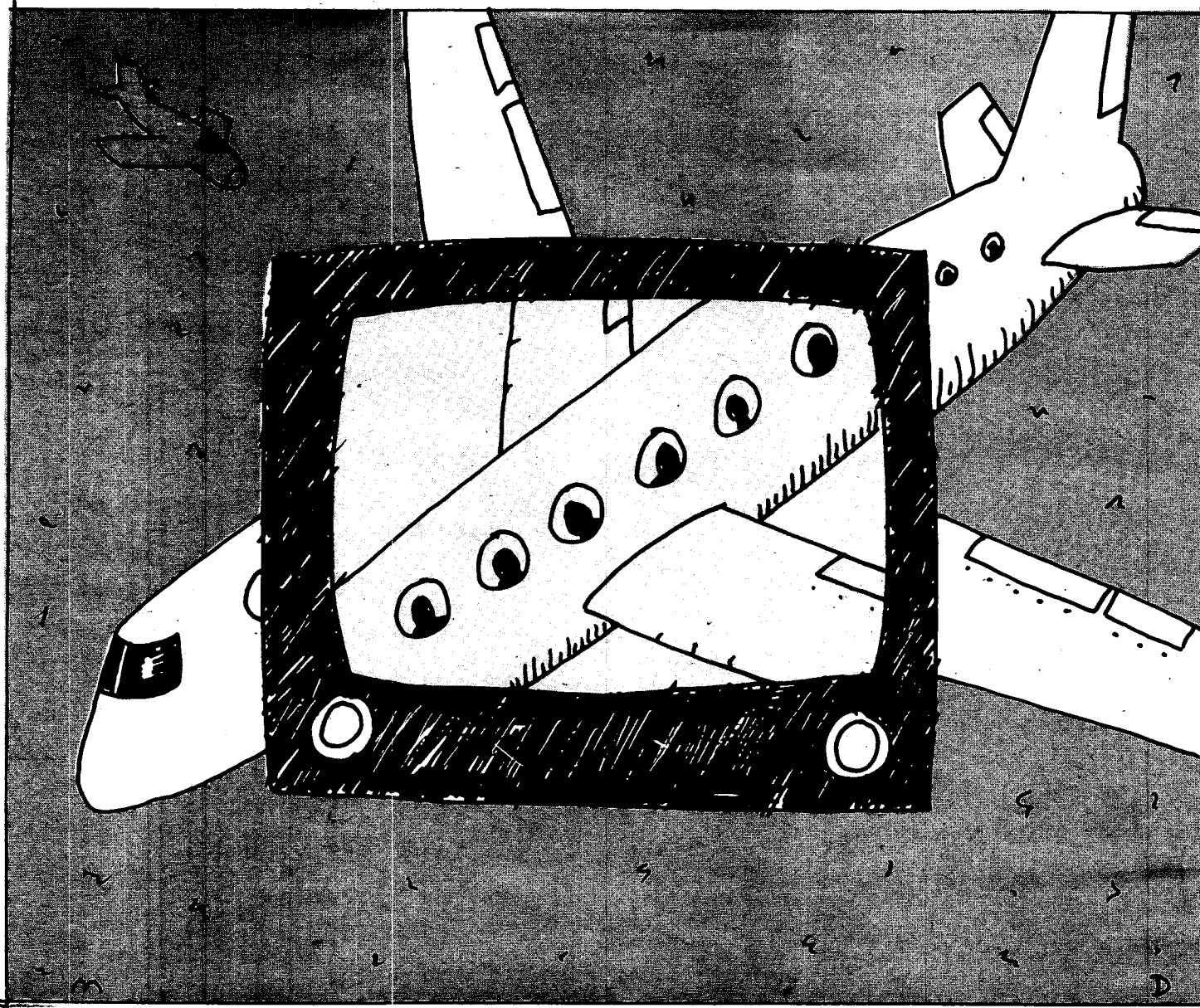
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What's up, docudrama?



Middle-brow entertainment collides with instant history.

By Richard Mahler

John Walker will be watching carefully next month when CBS-TV airs its new miniseries *Family of Spies*. Walker, as you may recall, is the imprisoned leader of one of the biggest military espionage rings in the history of U.S.-Soviet spying.

He'll surely want to see how his life has been dramatized, since Walker will pocket a reported 15 percent of any profits resulting from exclusive use of his own story. That's on top of the more than \$1 million Walker and his kin were paid for nearly 20 years of espionage for the KGB.

Checkbook realism: Author Pete Earley, whose 1988 book *Family of Spies* was bought by CBS for an estimated \$100,000 as source material for the program, admits paying for John Walker's version of how the Walkers passed U.S. Navy secrets to Soviet agents.

"John Walker said to me from day one, 'I will not cooperate with anyone unless I'm paid,'" recalls Earley. "That caused me a lot of trouble because I don't believe in checkbook journalism."

Nonetheless, the former *Washington Post* reporter reluctantly agreed to meet Walker's demands in the belief that an Internal Revenue Service lien would divert any such payments to the federal government.

Whatever its ultimate financial outcome, the subsequent three-way deal between

author, criminal and network is only the latest in a lengthening parade of those cashing in on TV's latest craze: the overnight docudrama.

"He's the American dream gone bad," says Jennifer Alward, who produced *Family of Spies* for Phoenix Entertainment after arranging to pay Walker's wife for her side of the story.

Attempts to bring "instant history" into the American living room reached the height of irresponsibility in May when CBS ran *Guts and Glory*, a miniseries based on the life of Oliver North, during the very hours in which a sequestered Washington jury was deciding criminal charges against him.

Executive producer/director/writer Mike Robe concedes that the broadcast's editing was hastened to capitalize on saturation news coverage of the North trial. He also defends his creation of a "composite" character in *Guts and Glory*, White House adviser Aaron Sykes, who acts as a kind of conscience for the administration by openly questioning some of North's bold tactics.

"You need to give voice to the opposite thought and philosophy that North represents," says Robe. "Otherwise you simply have a drama with no conflict, and it doesn't play."

Tailoring history to fit the docudrama formula is disturbing to close observers of the genre, including former CBS News exec-

utive Joe Salzman, now director of the University of Southern California's broadcast journalism program.

"The viewer will believe that this fictional character exists, and I wouldn't be surprised if they would use that fictional character in their understanding of everything that happened with Oliver North," he says.

As for Pete Earley's sellout to spymaster Walker, Los Angeles attorney and media-law expert Jon Cutler argues that journalists "should never pay for their stories. There's a credibility problem with respect to purchased stories.... Is there any way to test the truth of something a John Walker has said?"

Motive and opportunity: Salzman and other critics are equally troubled by the tendency of docudramas to assign motives to key characters by simplifying reality or presenting questionable allegations without attribution or refutation.

"When TV deals with real people and real events of history," says Salzman, "it takes on an obligation not inherent in TV situation comedies and soap operas. I believe it then takes on the obligation of journalism and history: the requirement to be accurate, to be fair, to be balanced and to be impartial. To me this obligation transcends all of the problems of dramatic construction as well as the individual's right to be creative and the need to get and hold an audience."

Producers of both news and entertainment shows are predatory by nature. Always on the prowl for action-packed, jeopardy-filled stories that are likely to grab and sustain viewer interest, one group queues up for movie or miniseries rights as soon as the other has headed back to the newsroom. And when docudrama collides with documentary, viewers can never be sure about the truth.

For example, two versions of history were offered in competing dramatizations of the 1983 downing of a Korean airliner over the Soviet Union. Last year's *Shootdown* on NBC speculated the passenger jet was on a spy mission when it was shot down by a Soviet missile and suggested that the Reagan administration exploited the incident to advance its anti-Soviet agenda.

In August, HBO cablecast *Tailspin: Behind the Korean Airliner Tragedy*, which used admitted "composite characters" and "representative incidents" to advance the theory that the jet was on a routine civilian flight and was simply a victim of mistaken identity.

Network researchers have found that history-based dramas often garner audiences that are from 10 to 15 percent larger than other TV movies.

That's why, in addition to *Family of Spies*, network viewers this season will see adaptations of the final days of the Nixon presidency, George Bush's World War II flying career, New York's racially motivated Howard Beach murder, the AIDS-caused death of actor Rock Hudson, the *Challenger* disaster, desegregation of Boston's public schools and the killing of a Mexico-based U.S. drug enforcement agent in 1986. We'll also see a six-hour drama about the Kennedy family, Farrah Fawcett playing a mother accused of shooting her children and an adaptation of Joe McGuinness' best-selling account of how an upstanding New Jersey businessman arranged his wife's murder.

Ironically, this bumper crop of blatantly exploitative docudramas comes at a time when the consensus among TV critics is that this season's weekly series are among the "safest" ever scheduled.

Sweeps and creeps: It appears that network programmers, threatened by boycott-happy pressure groups and conservative activists, decided to sanitize the nightly shows that much of Middle America watches and take their chances with the highly promotable specials designed to boost viewership during the ratings "sweeps." Network promotional announcements are trumpeting these specials over a wider territory than ever this fall, thanks to tie-in contests and campaigns involving Sears, K mart, Pizza Hut, McDonald's and other coast-to-coast retailers.

Even the upstart Fox Network, controlled by tabloid newspaper baron Rupert Murdoch, is getting into the act via a cross-promotion with Coca-Cola that involves such lurid Fox shows as *A Current Affair*, *The Reporters* and *Cops*. So pervasive is the Australian émigré's influence that a new pejorative coinage has attached itself to this new program hybrid known as "Murdocumentaries."

These shows are typified by their practice of re-enacting crimes and other events when actual news footage isn't available. To make matters more confusing, participants in these events, including victims, often appear as themselves in recreations that are staged on location.

Continued on page 22